

“
Got Your

Back Talk”



MABAS Illinois

Volume 25.1

From the President:

by Chief Don Davids

Greetings to all MABAS Members,

Welcome to 2026. I hope everyone had a safe and enjoyable holiday season as 2025 closed out and that you and your communities are ready for whatever challenges 2026 will bring. So far, the weather has been mild, and large-scale incidents have not been common.

The MABAS-OFSM 4-gas project is off to a great start. Over 300 of the available monitors have been sent to the MABAS Branch Operations Chiefs for delivery to requesting agencies. If you are a department/district with an annual budget of less than \$500,000 and want to receive a monitor, you should apply as soon as possible. I anticipate exhausting the supply of monitors prior to reaching departments with a budget of more than \$750,000.

The 2026 MABAS Command Training Summit is just around the corner. The summit will be held February 16-18 in Bloomington. We have a very interesting group of speakers who will discuss some recent real-world incidents. I am sure they will be very enlightening.

We will also have many fire service vendors for you to visit who provide beneficial products and services. Our committees will meet on February 16 prior to the beginning of the summit and will work on committee goals, workplans, and grant funding ideas. If you have never attended the training summit, I am sure you would find it very worthwhile. Registration is available on the MABAS-IL website.

I am sure most of you know that there has been a reduction in grant-funded training, overtime, and backfill. As a reminder, a student must be on a special teams training roster in CIMS six weeks prior to the start of a class to be eligible for reimbursement.

Our next executive board meeting is in Bloomington in conjunction with the MABAS Command Training Summit. The meeting will be held February 17 at 4:00 p.m. I hope to see you there.

Please stay safe and keep up the good work of protecting your communities.

Respectfully,
Don Davids
President, MABAS-IL
davids@mabas-il.org

In This Issue

Home protection	2
Message from CEO	3
Four (4) gas project	5
Knox Box Program	6
Camp I Am Me	7
MABAS Training Summit	9
Important Insurance Information	10
Communication Seminar	11
MABAS notification systems	12
Vendor thank you	13
Training Reimbursement Reminder	16
ILTF-1 news	18
Map Trivia Branch Chief info	22
Project Fire Buddies	24
Dispatch Center update	25
MABAS clothing	26
Free Decon Equipment	27
MABAS Foundation	28
MABAS Training Summit agenda	

Save The Date:
MABAS Training Summit
February 16-20, 2026

www.mabas-il.org

The Coldest Day of the Year Is Almost Here—Here's How to Winter-Proof Your Home

Stay cozy and avoid costly repairs with these must-do winter prep tips.

Jan 16, 2026 8:55 PM EST



Wonderful house with winter mood. Winter landscape. ANAYAT ART / Shutterstock.com

Key Points

- January 20 is known as one of the coldest days of the year, so it can help to winter-proof your home.
- Prevent frozen pipes and heating issues by insulating and maintaining your home systems.
- Prepare for power outages by dressing warmly, using generators safely and seeking shelter if needed.

Bundle up—January 20 has a reputation for being one of winter's coldest days. Back in 1954, Rogers Pass, Montana, hit a jaw-dropping -70°F , which was one of the coldest readings ever recorded in the United States. Years later, on January 20, 1985, Chicago hit -27°F , helping cement the date's icy reputation.

While most of us won't face temperatures anywhere near that, even a standard winter deep freeze can cause big problems at home, from frozen pipes to heating issues. The good news is that [a little preparation](#) now can help you avoid stress, expensive repairs and last-minute emergencies down the road.

MABAS 2026 Training Summit Bloomington Normal February 16-20



A Message from MABAS-Illinois

By: Chief Officer Bernie Lyons

I would like to start my first “Message” by thanking Chief Glenn Ericksen for his dedication and leadership during his 12 years at MABAS, including the last 8 years as Chief Executive Officer. Through government shut-downs, federal “freezes,” and some reductions in federal grants, Glenn has kept MABAS strong, responsive and a nationwide model for emergency mutual aid.

If you have been following the news, (or following previous newsletters) you know that Illinois is facing some challenges federal funding, including the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHGP) and the Urban Area Initiative Security (UASI) funding.

Despite these challenges, I believe MABAS continues to have a strong and supported future. While federal funding has decreased, the State of Illinois’ Preparedness and Response (PAR) Grants

have increased in each of the last 7 years. The Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal continues to support MABAS through the funding of MABAS insurance and additional special initiatives like the state-wide 4-Gas Monitor program and funding for Search Rescue Cameras for MABAS Technical Rescue Teams.

Partnerships with the Illinois Emergency management Agency-Office of Homeland Security (IEMA-OHS) and the Cook Coun-



ty Emergency Management and Regional Security (CCEMRS) have never been stronger, in part because of the MABAS Division’s, Team’s, and Chief’s strong and swift responses to such incidents as Hur-

ricane Helene, Texas Flooding, the Democratic National Convention and EMS and Command assistance in Broadview during large protest/demonstration events. When that phone rings, MABAS Divisions and Teams answer, every time. All in addition to the robust day-to-day mutual aid response MABAS departments and districts provide every day.

Politically, Illinois House Bill 4144, sponsored by State Representative Mary Beth Canty (54th District), which aims to provide a dependable funding source for both MABAS and ILEAS, has garnered some early support and co-sponsorships from legislators. (NOTE: If you have not already done so, or even if you have, please let your local State Senator or Representative know of your support for this Bill.)

So, we welcome 2026 and all the challenges that come with it. Our organization is resolute, our membership is strong, and as long as we continue to work together and communicate with each other, our future is bright.



The Coldest Day of the Year Is Almost Here— Here's How to Winter-Proof Your Home

Continued from page 2

Protect Your Plumbing

Frozen pipes are a common and costly problem for homeowners, with repairs for a burst interior pipe averaging nearly \$300—and sometimes more, according to a report by HomeServe.

Signs of a frozen pipe include reduced water flow and pipes that feel unusually cold. If you notice either, turn off your home's main water supply right away. You can also thaw the pipe using a hair dryer or heating pad.

Luckily, there are a few simple steps you can take to prevent a frozen pipe from happening in the first place.

1. Keep your thermostat set to at least 55°F, even when you're away from home.
2. Insulate exposed pipes in unheated areas like basements, attics, crawl spaces and garages using pipe insulation or heat tape.
3. Open the cabinet doors under sinks to allow warm air to circulate.
4. Let faucets drip slightly during extreme cold. Moving water is much less likely to freeze.
5. Disconnect outdoor hoses and make sure all spigots are turned off.

Heat Your Home Safely

Heating systems are essential during cold weather, which is why it's important to keep them in good working order. According to Randall Boutte, HVAC Training Manager at HomeServe, a tune-up catches small problems before they become big ones and keeps your system working well. "Getting your furnace checked each fall is one of the easiest and cheapest ways to keep your home safe and warm," he says.

Other ways to stay safe and comfortable this winter are to check your furnace before or early in the winter season, change your air filters regularly so your system runs well, and keep vents clear by not blocking them with furniture, rugs or curtains.

Get Ready for Power Outages

Cold weather can sometimes cause power outages, so it's important to be prepared. Dress in layers, including hats and gloves, to stay warm. Use generators only outdoors and away from windows or doors to avoid carbon monoxide from seeping into your home. Also, stay hydrated and avoid alcohol, which actually speeds up heat loss.

If your home gets too cold, go to a community warming shelter or stay with friends or family.

Winter's coldest days don't have to be stressful. With a few smart precautions, you can protect your home, avoid costly repairs and keep your family cozy—no matter what January has in store.

By Nor'Adila Hepburn

News Writer, DenGarden

<https://dengarden.com/news/how-to-winter-proof-your-home-tips>



MUTUAL AID BOX ALARM SYSTEM

MABAS - Illinois
 233 W. Hintz Road
 Wheeling, IL 60090
 PHONE: 847-403-0500
 FAX: 847-215-1875

Office of the State Fire Marshall and MABAS- Illinois project summary.

Atmospheric monitor (4-Gas) project

In cooperation with the Illinois office of the State Fire Marshall, MABAS-IL has received funding to provide Atmospheric monitoring equipment (4-gas) to Illinois fire departments.

Atmospheric monitoring for hazardous conditions is a critical level of service that the public expects local fire agencies to provide. This level of service is very common in fire departments with adequate budget support but may be lacking in financially challenged departments or districts.

MABAS-IL provides monitoring support for Hazardous Materials teams statewide and by utilizing the same brand of 4-gas monitor, will leverage a network of calibration stations to provide support to participating agencies. These monitors will have a warranty of 5 years and an expected life span of 5-7 years.

MABAS-IL has 385 Drager 4-gas monitors, that we will inventory, label, and provide basic end user training and distribution to Illinois fire departments. We will identify the closest calibration station and provide calibration gases. We will identify potential participants by setting priorities. Priority 1 would include all fire service agencies with annual budgets of under \$250,000. Priority 2 would be agencies above that threshold.

Please have a command officer of your fire department/district go to our website: www.mabas-il.org and fill out the 4-gas project request form. We will schedule regional delivery and training once we have a list of eligible agencies. I anticipate the distribution will mostly be at conferences or meetings that MABAS attends over the next several months.

If you have questions, please contact me.

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MABAS-IL Change-of-Quarters Knox-Box® System

Fire departments anticipating being tied up for a length of time on a multiple alarm fire or other large or complicated incident often (and should) include Change-of Quarter (COQ) companies on their MABAS Box Alarm Cards in order to have Mutual Aid departments move into their station(s) to provide response protection for other possible incidents in their village, municipality or district. In “the old days” the hosting department could simply leave their station unlocked so incoming companies could walk right in. But these days, fire stations are advised not to leave their stations open.



#3275

In early 2002 MABAS-IL, through the Knox Company, instituted a unique COQ Knox-Box® system to facilitate ease of entry by incoming COQ companies to an otherwise empty station. This a voluntary participation program available to all MABAS-member fire departments in Illinois.

Here’s how it works: Dealing with the MABAS-IL Knox-Box Program Coordinator, a member fire station purchases a small key safe for mounting on the exterior of their station. Once the box is securely mounted, they lock their station key/card/fob/entry code inside the key safe. Incoming COQ companies participating in the program then use their MABAS-IL key to open the key safe to get the key, etc. to

then access the station. The simplicity of the program is that participating fire departments have to carry just one statewide COQ program key on their outgoing COQ vehicles to gain access to any and all participating fire stations.

Want to know more about the program? Contact Chief (ret.) Harry Tallacksen via email at tallacksen@mabas-il.org or via phone at 815-262-4374.



#3264



Oh, how I love Camp I Am Me. My daughter has been a camper, now a counselor. We look forward to the Camp every year. She loves her Camp family. She is open about her burns and we always reach out or talk to people who have been burned.

Introducing Camp Encourage, Family Camp for Youngest of Survivors

Camp I Am Me's newest support program, Camp Encourage, is a special weekend camp designed for burn survivors 0-6 and their families so they can better understand and heal physically, emotionally, and socially after a burn. Camp Encourage, presented by The Haage Family Foundation, provides a unique opportunity for families to... [read more.](#)



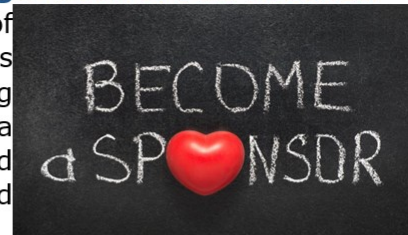
Rockford Family Day - Inferno Clay Studio!

Join us on Saturday, January 31st in Rockford at Inferno Clay Studio! The studio is co-owned by Alyssa, a burn survivor and Camp I Am Me volunteer. This event will bring families together to have fun, engage, and support one another, while having a chance to engage their creative genius to paint handmade mugs. Spots are limited.. [read more.](#)



Sponsorship Opportunities Available to Align with CIAM Mission

Camp I Am Me has new and enhanced levels of opportunities for businesses looking to align themselves with an impactful nonprofit organization. By supporting Camp I Am Me, companies have a chance to make a meaningful difference in the lives of burn survivors and their families, while also enhancing their own brand image... [read more.](#)



Roaring Good Time at Brookfield Zoo!

Brookfield Zoo was the destination for our annual Winter Gathering as families and volunteers welcomed one another with warm hugs in the Savannah Room for dinner. Knit hats were given out to everyone and were a well-received gift as the temperature fell once the sun set. Once everyone was full, they headed outside and... [read more.](#)





Upcoming Programs

Survivor Support Group

(Maywood)
January 20, 2026

Family Day

(Rockford)
January 31, 2026

**Friends of Camp I Am Me
Recognition Reception**

(Woodridge)
March 5, 2026

Camp Encourage Family Camp

(Utica)
April 24-26, 2026

Upcoming Fundraisers

Boot Day for Burn Survivors

Rally Dates (Statewide)
May 5-7, 2026

**Fire Service T-Shirt CAMPAign
Commitment Deadline**

May 22, 2026

**Camp I Am Me Golf Classic
Save the Date!**

September 16, 2026

**Learn about how you can
support Camp I Am Me
by Clicking Here!**

Last Month's Top Supporters

Mr. Bruce Couturier

Long Grove
Fire Fighters Association

McHenry Firefighters Association

Pleasantview
Fire Protection District

Rolling Meadows Firefighters
Local 3075

Rotary Club of
Glenview Sunrise

Mr. Michael Schrimmer

Songs for Heroes

Terrence Hoyle Golf Memorial

Windy City Harley-Davidson

Survivor Support

Request Support Information
from Camp I Am Me

See all available burn
survivor support programs



Camp I Am Me

426 W. Northwest Highway, Mount Prospect, Illinois 60056
www.campiamme.org | (847) 390-0911
Support burn survivors by providing a financial donation [here](#)

MABAS Training Summit 2026

Command starts Monday, February 16, 2026 through Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Communications starts Wednesday, February 18, 2026 through Friday, February 20, 2026

Registration stays open until the Conference, however the room block for a guaranteed hotel reservation is until Friday, January 23, 2026. Rooms are limited at the Marriott.



Get your ticket for the HOTTEST Training Summit taking place in February 2026

Marriott Hotel

Bloomington-Normal 201 Broadway Ave.

Normal, IL 61761

For more information please email mabas-summit@mabas-il.org

IMPORTANT

IMPORTANT

IMPORTANT

- .Is your MABAS Division vehicle insured?
- .Unless you have an Illinois Insurance Identification Card in the vehicle, that vehicle is

NOT INSURED.

If you have a vehicle that you believe should be insured by MABAS, and **does not have an insurance card**, please contact your regional Branch Chief.

See page 22 for Branch Chief information

ILLINOIS INSURANCE IDENTIFICATION CARD

COMPANY NUMBER 384	COMPANY National Union Fire Ins. Co. of Pittsburgh, Pa.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PERSONAL
POLICY NUMBER [REDACTED]	EFFECTIVE DATE 11-01-2025	EXPIRATION DATE 11-01-2026	VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER [REDACTED]
YEAR MAKE/MODEL [REDACTED]	AGENCY/COMPANY ISSUING CARD VFIS 183 Leader Heights Road, York, PA 17402-4714 (800)233-1957		
INSURED MUTUAL AID BOX ALARM SYSTEM (MABAS) MABAS 24 175-233 WEST HINTZ ROAD WHEELING, IL 60090-0000			

Examine Policy Exclusions Carefully.
This Form Does Not Constitute Any Part of Your Insurance Policy.
SEE IMPORTANT NOTICE ON REVERSE SIDE

MABAS COMMUNICATIONS SEMINAR UPDATES

By Mark Sikorski



On November 5, 2025, The MABAS Communications Committee held our final regional Communications Seminar of the year at WESCOM Dispatch in Plainfield. Attendance was at its maximum, with great participation and discussions from everyone! The parking lot was full of MABAS Assets and Apparatus from around the area thanks to Division 15 and surrounding agencies. We would like to send a special thanks to WESCOM for hosting and to 1-800-BoardUp for sponsoring lunch!



MABAS ILLINOIS

NOTIFICATION SYSTEMS

MABAS utilizes three different types of systems to notify Dispatch Agencies, Divisional Executive Boards, and members for situational awareness and escalating events. These systems are redundant to reduce failures in sending out notifications. Please see below of a description of each.



Constant Contact is used for general non-emergent notifications for MABAS Illinois and the MABAS Foundation.



OnSolve is used for deployment and operational messaging for MABAS Illinois



Regroup is used for deployment and operational messaging for MABAS Illinois

**A SINCERE THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR
VENDORS FOR YOUR PAST SUPPORT
DURING OUR 2025 MABAS TRAINING SUMMIT!
LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN 2026**



Diamond level Sponsors



Gold Level Sponsor



Executive Happy Hour Sponsor



**A SINCERE THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR
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Copper level Sponsors



Silver Level Sponsor



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Brass level Sponsors





TRAINING REIMBURSEMENT REMINDERS

For Class Reimbursements:

Students must be on their MABAS Divisions related Specialty Team Training Roster in CIMS 3.0 at least six (6) weeks prior to the start of class. **Be sure to your Deployable and Training Roster eligible members are entered into CIMS 3.0!**

Reimbursement requests **MUST BE submitted to MABAS within 30 days after completion of the course.**

The request must include a coversheet on **Department Letterhead**, signed by the Chief of Department, with a listing of the **student and backfill personnel's standard and overtime pay rates.**

The **Reimbursement Request for Overtime/Backfill** form must be included and filled out including the student and any backfill personnel;

The maximum rate per hour for reimbursement is **\$58.00**

Only the number of hours spent in class is reimbursable. This includes the **total hours** paid out to the student and/or back fill personnel.

MABAS does not reimburse course tuition.

Lodging reimbursement is based on double occupancy, and the class must be **more than 50 miles** from the sponsoring department. A **Hotel receipt must be included** in the submission packet. **Reservation documents are not acceptable.** The

reimbursement rate for lodging is available on the Illinois Department of Central Management Services website under 'Preferred Hotel Listing' <https://cms.illinois.gov/employees/travel/preferredhotel.html>

NOTE: 'AirBRB style' lodging is NOT reimbursable!

The student **must pass** the course to be eligible for reimbursement.

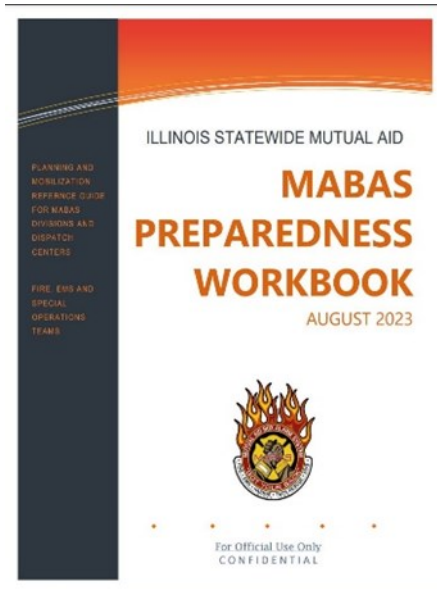
The student is eligible for a re-test twice within a year of course completion.

Please email any questions or **Class reimbursements** to overtimereimbursement@mabas-il.org
Exercise reimbursements should be emailed to Michael Graves at graves@mabas-il.org

Deployment reimbursements should be mailed to deployment@mabas-il.org

Updated February 10, 2025

**Does your Dispatch Center have the updated Preparedness Workbook?
(Dated August 2023)**



Go to www.mabas-il.org, and click on the 'MABAS INFORMATIONAL UPDATES' tab on the main page;



Select the '2023 Preparedness Workbook' to download!

Contact your Operations Branch Chief with any questions!

IL TF-1 NEWS



FOURTH QUARTER REVIEW:

IL-TF1 Participated in Training and Events

Morris Water Exercise – with ILWR1 and Drone Teams – October 20

Canine Training in Missouri at MO-TF1 – October 25 and 26

At SUSAR Classes, November 6 to 9, 2025

At National Urban Search and Rescue Conference – November 10 to 12, 2025



IL-TF1 Canines at MO-TF1 Training Center October 25 and 26, 2025



IL TF-1 NEWS



Boat Drill on the Illinois River – Launched from Stratton State Park, Morris, IL



Tech Search Specialist Class at Ocala, Florida, at the Florida State Fire College



IL TF-1 NEWS



Heavy Equipment Rigging Specialist (HERS) Class –
Tavares, Florida at Lake Technical College, Institute
of Public Safety.



Logistics Specialist Class – Apopka, FL



IL TF-1 NEWS

IL-TF1 at the National Urban Search and Rescue Conference – Orlando, FL, November 10 to 12, 2025



Orlando, Florida, at the SUSAR Conference, Other Classes Attended – Safety Officer, Planning Team Manager, HazMat Specialists,



Boat / Floodwater Logistics Class – Orlando, Florida at the SUSAR Conference



MABAS Trivia

The picture below is of a MABAS "Truck"

What is its MABAS given name?

- A. Command Post
- B. Mission Support Unit
- C. Emergency Medical Support Morgue Truck

The answer will be in the April's Newsletter!
 Answer for October's newsletter is on the following page.



The answer to all of our questions can be found at

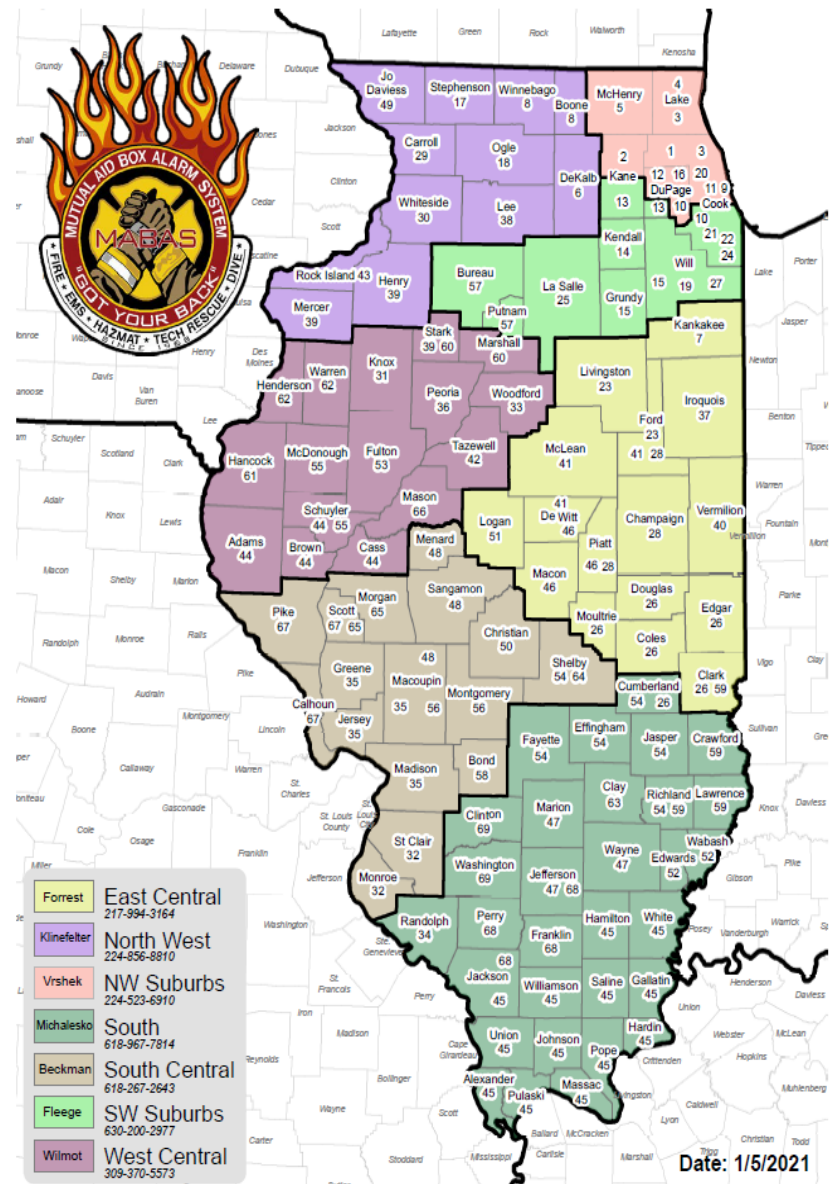
www.mabas-il.org

For More Information

MABAS, Illinois
 847-403-0500



MABAS Division Map With Operation Branch Chiefs



Questions/Comments

If your Department or Division has responded to a call or had a big event and you would like MABAS to add it to this newsletter, please feel free to email or call us. We look forward to any and all suggestions or comments.

Email—Littlefield@mabas-il.org Phone—847-403-0511

Answer to the October Trivia question...

TENT CITY TRAILER



Capabilities

Semi trailer with 10 Western Shelter 19' X 35' tents, HVAC, cots, and accessories. Built-in generator to power all ten tents. Accommodates 200 responders.



OUR MISSION

We are firefighters who offer support to children fighting critical illnesses. Their battle will not be fought alone!

Project Fire Buddies is a beacon of hope for every family we have the honor to serve.

HELP US CREATE GOOD DAYS.



OUR STORY

In 2016, Project Fire Buddies was initiated based on Kurt DeGroot's vision while serving at a fire department in the south suburbs of Chicago. With the collaboration of Ryan Ballard, steadfast support from his wife and children, and the dedication of other team members, the organization's influence has expanded significantly, driving its ambitious goals.

WHAT WE DO

Project Fire Buddies brings joy to kids struggling with critical illnesses. We believe that no child should fight their battle alone. Since its inception PFB has been steadily growing and expanding.

Project Fire Buddies ranks in the top 4% of non-profit organizations worldwide. Each day, new chapters are joining our mission, helping to spread joy to even more children.

OUR CHAPTERS

Our chapters prioritize cultivating connections with their Fire Buddies. Members of PFB pay visits to Fire Buddies at their homes, often times arriving in a parade of fire vehicles with flashing lights and blaring sirens. They bring presents for birthdays and holidays, engage in games, offer tickets to concerts and special occasions, and participate in significant events in the children's lives. PFB has also assisted families in obtaining essential medical equipment and supplies. Fire Buddies even drop by the firehouse occasionally for meals with the crew, station tours, and to see the rigs.



Do you know a child who is struggling with a critical illness and in need of a reason to smile? Project Fire Buddies is here to help. While healthcare privacy laws are crucial, they can make it challenging for us to reach the children who require our support.

Visit our website today to complete our contact form and help us make a positive impact on a child in your life.

GET INVOLVED

*YOUR SUPPORT
MAKES A DIFFERENCE*

Project Fire Buddies has expanded to include more than 140 chapters across 12 states. To find out if a fire department in your area is connected with Project Fire Buddies, please visit our website at projectfirebuddies.org.



Follow Us!



Project Fire Buddies is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that relies on the support of kind donors. We gladly accept cash and check donations all year long, and you can also contribute through our website.

Has your Dispatch Center gone through a consolidation.....

Have you had personnel changes in management....

Is your Dispatch Center information Up to Date?

Go to www.mabas-il.org, and click on the 'MABAS INFORMATIONAL UPDATES' tab on the main page;



Select the 'Primary and Secondary Dispatch Centers' document to review your centers information.

Please notify your Operations Branch Chief, or send updates to Linda Cruz at cruz@mabas-il.org

EAGLE ENGRAVING, INC.

IL MABAS



PRESENTS THE 2021

CORNER



Custom EMBROIDERED APPAREL

We embroider your logo on top-notch quality shirts, outerwear, and active-wear. You can count on us to provide you with the best customer service.

Personalization with your name or division is available upon request.

QUESTIONS?

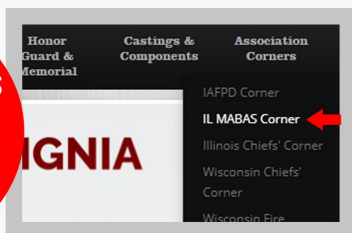
apparel@eagle-engraving.com
630-377-1056

IL MABAS MERCHANDISE

Proudly display your MABAS IL membership with our wide selection of engraved gifts and accessories. Personalization is also available for these products.



Visit our IL MABAS corner on our website for more exclusive items!



STATE OF ILLINOIS
PRELIMINARY EXPOSURE REDUCTION PROJECT



**FREE DECON EQUIPMENT
AVAILABLE TO ILLINOIS FIRE DEPARTMENTS**



TO ORDER, VISIT:
FSI.ILLINOIS.EDU

*MABAS is looking to get your department
logo!!!*

MABAS would like for you to email your department logo to us.

We are using department logos for Tier II cards.

Please send your logo to bmampe@mabas-il.org



MABAS Foundation Partners



Each month on 'Inside Darley' Paul Darley highlights industry trends, new products, best practices, thought leadership and more. The videos typically last about 4 minutes and are supplemented with insightful articles and resources. We invite the MABAS community to watch our October series here and if you want even more content, we hope you'll subscribe.

The latest video can be found here <https://darley.com/about/entry/inside-darley-october-2020>

People can sign up for newsletters here: <https://darley.com/about/newsletter-signup>



**AIR ONE
EQUIPMENT, INC.**

Founded in 1990, Air One Equipment, Inc. is a family owned and operated full-line fire and safety equipment distributor. Our sales and service staff work out of a modern 8,000 square foot facility located in South Elgin, Illinois. Our second location is operated out of a 3,500 square foot facility in Menomonee Falls, WI. In both locations, we have a warehouse full of best in class products available for our first responders.

At Air One Equipment, Inc., "You know us by the company we keep". We offer our customers quality equipment at competitive prices from the leading manufacturers in the industry. We pride ourselves in continuing to provide exceptional service after sale, both on the products we sell and the way we treat our customers. With over 400 years of combined experience in the fire service industry, our sales consultants and factory trained service staff are able to assist you in choosing and maintaining the equipment you need to safely perform your job. Contact "The House That Service Built!" to see how we can serve you in the future. 888-247-1204



**BUILDING
AMERICA®**

Union Pacific Railroad Company is the principal operating company of Union Pacific Corporation (NYSE: UNP). We are one of America's most recognized companies, with a heritage of building the country and a vision to keep doing so.

Our rail network connects 23 states in the western two-thirds of the country, providing a critical link in the global supply chain. Over the last 10 years, from 2009 to 2018, Union Pacific invested \$34 billion in our network and operations, supporting America's transportation infrastructure and enabling economic growth.



MABAS ILLINOIS

233 W. Hintz Rd.

Wheeling, IL 60090

847-403-0525

WWW.MABASFOUNDATION-IL.ORG

Welcome to the
2026
MABAS-Illinois Command &
Communications Training
Summit

February 16 – February 20, 2026

*22nd Annual Summit
2004 – 2026*

Marriott Hotel & Conference Center
Bloomington-Normal, Illinois

Current as of January 15, 2026

MABAS-ILLINOIS COMMAND TRAINING SUMMIT
February 16 – February 18, 2026

Monday	February 16, 2026	
0730 – 0830	Breakfast for Committee and Staff Members – Redbird Lobby Vendor Sponsor	
0700 – 1700	Registration – North End Redbird Lobby	
0830 – 0900	Committee Orientation & 2026 Briefings – Redbird C/D	
0900 – 1230	Committee Work Sessions	
	By-Laws Committee – North Executive	Water Rescue Committee – Redbird E
	Logistics Committee – Fell A	Communications Committee – Redbird F
	Fire Intelligence Liaisons – Hunt	UAS Committee – Redbird G
	TRT Committee – Fell B	HAZMAT Committee – Broadway
1145 – 1230	Working Committee Lunches – Redbird Lobby	
1300 – 1330	Welcome & Dignitary Comments – Redbird C/D <i>Bernie Lyons</i> , MABAS-ILLINOIS CEO <i>Don Davids</i> , MABAS-Illinois President Presentation of Colors; Pledge of Allegiance; Dignitary Comments	
1330 – 1430	Disaster Wargaming – How Gaming is Revolutionizing Education, Training, and Exercises – Redbird C/D – <i>Dr. Arthur Simental</i> Examine how disaster wargaming is being used as a formal exercise method to improve decision-making, consequence analysis, and preparedness. The session focuses on practical applications that allow agencies to test assumptions, explore second- and third-order effects, and strengthen training outcomes beyond traditional exercises.	
1445 – 1540	Breakout Sessions Round #1 #1 – Redbird C/D – Game Presentation – <i>Dr. Arthur Simental</i> Participants will work through an advanced tabletop disaster wargame built around realistic scenarios in McLean County, Illinois. This two-hour session demonstrates how wargaming can surface operational gaps, decision pressures, and coordination challenges before they appear in real incidents. #2 – Fell A – Policies Gaps – Real Consequences – From Minor Oversights to Major Headlines – <i>Jon Dorman</i> Operational readiness is critical, but administrative policy failures can create equal or greater organizational risk. This session uses real-world case examples to show how gaps in eligibility standards, discipline, and retaliation safeguards have led to costly consequences. Attendees will identify warning signs and policy areas that require command-level attention. #3 – Fell B - Effectiveness & Future of Special Teams – <i>Chief Steve Malone & Chief David Piper</i> Reviews the operational and financial realities of special teams, including true cost, response models, and box card effectiveness. The session challenges command staff to evaluate special teams through a risk-based lens rather than	

	<p>tradition. Emphasis is placed on sustainability and future planning at both the department and MABAS Division levels.</p> <p>#4 – Redbird E – Firemen’s Disciplinary Act – Chief Joseph Mitchell Provides a practical command-level review of the Firemen’s Disciplinary Act and its application during investigations and discipline. The session focuses on avoiding common missteps that lead to grievances, liability, and erosion of trust. When applied correctly, the Act supports consistency, accountability, and organizational stability.</p> <p>#5 – Redbird F – Find Me the Money – Chief Jeff Bryant Draws on decades of experience securing more than \$20 million in grants and funding. This session walks through local, state, and federal funding opportunities and outlines practical steps departments can take to improve their chances of success. Attendees will leave with a clearer path toward funding equipment and operational needs.</p> <p>#6 – Redbird G – From the Dashboard to the Fireground – Making Technology Work for the Fire Service – Chief Paul Polep Explores how technology can either enhance or hinder fire service operations depending on how it is governed and implemented. The session examines common integration challenges, leadership decision points, and accountability issues tied to software adoption. Emphasis is placed on maintaining command clarity and operational value.</p>
1540 – 1550	Breakout Session Rotation
1550 – 1645	<p>Breakout Session Round #2</p> <p>#1 – Redbird C/D – Game Presentation – Dr. Arthur Simental</p> <p>#2 – Fell A – Policies Gaps – Real Consequences – From Minor Oversights to Major Headlines – Jon Dorman</p> <p>#3 – Fell B - Effectiveness & Future of Special Teams – Chief Steve Malone & Chief David Piper</p> <p>#4 – Redbird E – Firemen’s Disciplinary Act – Chief Joseph Mitchell</p> <p>#5 – Redbird F – Find Me the Money – Chief Jeff Bryant</p> <p>#6 – Redbird G – From the Dashboard to the Fireground – Making Technology Work for the Fire Service – Chief Paul Polep</p>
1645 – 1700	Administrative Announcements & Day’s Summary – Redbird C/D
1800 – 2030	Tired Travelers & Dinner with our Vendors – Redbird A/B/C/D – Sponsored by AT&T and FirstNet

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Tuesday	February 17, 2026
0700 – 0800	Breakfast for Summit Attendees & Vendors – Redbird Lobby - Sponsor
0700 – 1600	Registration – North End Redbird Lobby
0800 – 0805	Welcome and Administrative Announcements - Redbird C/D
0805 – 0855	We Want You to Be the Chief, Chief! – Redbird C/D – <i>Chief Richard Mikel</i> Reviews an unusual leadership assignment in which a Fire Chief served as Acting Chief of Police for eleven months. The session examines organizational reaction, cross-discipline leadership challenges, and critical incidents involving joint responses. Lessons focus on adaptability, credibility, and command presence outside traditional roles.
0855 – 0910	Break with Vendors – Redbird A/B
0910 – 1000	Community Risk Reduction & NERIS Update – Redbird C/D – <i>J.C. Fultz, OSFM</i> Examines the evolving role of Community Risk Reduction in Illinois, including where progress is being made and what may come next. The session also provides an update on the transition to NERIS, highlighting key changes from legacy reporting systems and what departments should expect moving forward.
1000 – 1015	Break with Vendors – Redbird A/B
1000 – 1200	IESMA Board Meeting – Fell A
1015 – 1215	KEYNOTE: What is Real Risk Management All About? - Redbird C/D – <i>Gordon Graham</i> The phrase “risk management” gets thrown around a lot. But what is real risk management? It is more than the safety stuff; it is more than the insurance stuff; and it is more than the ergonomics stuff. Everything you do in your organization involves a level of risk. In this two-hour session, Gordon will explain how to recognize the real risks you face. He will then teach you how to prioritize these risks. Finally, he will show you how to mobilize (act) to do something about the real risks you face in your organization. At the end of two hours, you’ll understand how to better mitigate the real risks you face in your organization and make real change.
1215 – 1315	Lunch with Vendors – Redbird C/D
1230 – 1300	HSAC Fire Mutual Aid Committee Meeting – Blackburn
1300 – 1400	MABAS INTERSTATE Meeting – Broadway
1315 – 1415	Using Technology to Improve Readiness Part 1 – Redbird C/D – <i>Dr. Brad Miller and Charlie Ferriera</i> Provides a strategic overview of how departments can use technology to support readiness, including compliance tracking, skills assessment, and data-driven training decisions. The focus is on aligning tools with operational needs rather than adopting technology for its own sake.

1415 – 1445	Break with Vendors – Redbird A/B
1445 – 1545	Using Technology to Improve Readiness Part 2 – Redbird C/D – <i>Dr. Brad Miller and Charlie Ferriera</i> A hands-on readiness war game using a scenario at Illinois State University. Participants will see how simulated environments can expose training gaps and readiness issues before they become operational problems.
1545 – 1600	Break with Vendors – Redbird A/B
1600 – 1700	Executive Board Meeting - Redbird C/D
1700 – 1800	Happy Hour - Redbird A/B/C/D – <i>Sponsored by Stryker</i> Command Door Prizes (Raffle & 50/50 winner need not be present)

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Wednesday	February 18, 2026
0700 – 0800	Breakfast for Summit Attendees – Redbird Lobby Vendor Sponsor
0800 – 0845	The Future of MABAS – Redbird C/D – <i>MABAS Elected Board & CEO</i> An open forum focused on the future direction of MABAS and the challenges ahead. Discussion will address system expectations, operational demands, and opportunities for improvement. <i>What must MABAS preserve—and what must it adapt—to remain effective in the years ahead?</i>
0845 – 0945	Rules of Engagement – Redbird C/D – Deputy Chief <i>Todd Friddle</i> Reviews how escalated incidents are managed within and across MABAS Divisions, from interdivisional requests to statewide response. The session focuses on the roles of Division leadership, Special Operations Teams, and responding companies, and the processes that differ from day-to-day operations. Emphasis is placed on maintaining operational efficiency, clarity, and readiness during deployment.
0945 – 1000	Break with Vendors – Redbird A/B
1000 – 1200	Joint Session with Dispatchers – Redbird C/D – Standard Response Protocol and Standard Reunification Method: An Overview for Fire Service Personnel – <i>J.P. Moore and Kim Lohse</i> Provides fire service personnel with an overview of the Standard Response Protocol (SRP) and Standard Reunification Method (SRM). The session explains how these frameworks support coordinated safe responses during school and community emergencies and the fire service’s role in their implementation.
1200 – 1215	Closing Comments and Wrap Up

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Wednesday	February 18, 2026
0800 – 1600	Registration – North End Redbird Lobby
1000 – 1200	<p>Joint Session with Dispatchers – Redbird C/D – Standard Response Protocol and Standard Reunification Method: An Overview for Fire Service Personnel – <i>J.P. Moore and Dr. Kim Lohse</i></p> <p>This session breaks down what SRP and SRM are and why they matter during school and community emergencies. You'll learn how these common frameworks help first responders, schools, and the public stay coordinated and reduce confusion during high-stress events.</p>
1200 – 1300	Lunch on your own!
1300 – 1330	Opening Introductions and Ice Breaker – Redbird C/D
1330 – 1430	Meet Your OP's Branch Chief – Redbird C/D
1430 – 1445	Break with Vendors – Redbird A/B
1445 – 1545	<p>Telecommunicators and CPR – Redbird C/D – <i>Sgt Zach Oltmanns</i></p> <p>Listen to real 911 calls involving dispatcher-assisted CPR and see how early intervention can change outcomes. We'll talk through practical ways to start T-CPR faster and more effectively, along with a brief update on Senate Bill 1295 and new requirements for telecommunicators.</p>
1545 – 1645	<p>Lesson Learned – Redbird C/D – <i>Chris Lienhardt, Des Breese, Jake Cranston, and Jim Klinefelter</i></p> <p>A review of three MABAS-activated incidents from Divisions 6, 17, and 29. The discussion focuses on what worked, what didn't, and what dispatch and communications centers can take away from real events.</p>
1645 – 1700	Communications Door Prizes – Raffle – 50/50 Drawing (Raffle & 50/50 winner need not be present)
1800 – 2030	Tired Travelers & Dinner with our Vendors – Pirates – Redbird A/B/C/D

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Thursday	February 19, 2026
0700 – 0800	Breakfast for Attendees & Vendors – Redbird Lobby – Vendor Sponsor
0800 – 0900	We are MABAS - Redbird C/D – <i>Mark Sikorski</i> An open discussion about what it really means to be part of the MABAS system. This session looks at shared responsibility, teamwork, and the role each of us plays in keeping the system strong. <i>How does your role support the success of MABAS statewide?</i>
0900 – 1000	Breakout Sessions MABAS Basics – Redbird C/D – <i>Tom Clifton</i> A practical overview of how MABAS started, how box cards work, and the critical role telecommunicators play when alarms are announced. Ideal for reinforcing the fundamentals that keep the system moving. MABAS Advanced – Redbird E – <i>Mark Sikorski and Rachel Thompson</i> Looks at dispatching and notifications during escalating incidents, including support across MABAS Divisions and Special Team activations. Focus on coordination when incidents grow beyond local resources.
1000 – 1015	Break with Vendors – Redbird B
1015 – 1100	Assets, Special Teams and the STIC - Redbird C/D – <i>Mark Sikorski and Darb Calvert</i> Review available MABAS assets and deployable Special Teams, along with how the Statewide Terrorism Intelligence Center fits into the bigger picture. Emphasis is on awareness and coordination.
1100 – 1130	The State of MABAS – Redbird C/D – <i>Chief Bernie Lyons</i> A look at where MABAS has been, where it stands today, and where it's headed. This session highlights system growth, challenges, and future priorities.
1100 – 1400	Illinois APCO/NENA Meeting – Redbird A
1130 – 1200	Illinois Pipeline Emergency Responders Initiative – Redbird C/D – <i>Chief Raymond Kay</i> An overview of a program designed to strengthen communication and relationships between responders, pipeline operators, and regulators. Learn how coordinated planning improves safety and response effectiveness.
1200 – 1300	Lunch with Vendors – Redbird C/D
1300 – 1430	Dispatch Simulator available! Sign up at the registration tables and bring your local box cards. North Executive Boardroom – <i>Joe McGrath</i>

1300 – 1500	<p>The Stop and Go of a Local Incident and Beyond – Redbird C/D – <i>Chris Lienhardt and Michael Graves</i></p> <p>Ever wonder what happens behind the scenes when an incident escalates statewide? This interactive session walks through each step of an activation from start to finish. You'll leave with a clearer picture of roles, timing, and decision points.</p>
1500 – 1515	Break with Vendors – Redbird A/B
1515 – 1615	<p>Telecommunicator Emergency Response Taskforce (IL-TERT) Overview – Redbird C/D – <i>Heather Butler</i></p> <p>Covers what IL-TERT is, what members do, and how deployments work. The session also explains training requirements and shares recent taskforce activity.</p>
1615 – 1700	<p>Securing the Cities Program Overview – Redbird C/D – <i>Mark Zilch</i></p> <p>Provides an overview of a Department of Homeland Security radiological and nuclear prevention program operating in the Chicago region. The session outlines scope, partner agencies, and available equipment and capabilities. Emphasis is placed on how these resources integrate with regional preparedness and operational response.</p>
1615 – 1630	Administrative Announcements & Day's Summary – Redbird C/D
Evening	On Your Own – Enjoy Bloomington-Normal

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Friday	February 20, 2026
0700 – 0800	Breakfast for Attendees & Vendors – Redbird Lobby – Vendor Sponsor
0800 – 0900	MABAS Year in Review – Redbird C/D – <i>Rachel Thompson</i> A video presentation highlighting MABAS-IL activities and deployments throughout 2025. A chance to see the scope and impact of the system over the past year.
0900 – 1000	SWIT and Radio Templates – Redbird C/D – <i>Steve Rauter</i> A brief update on the Statewide Interoperability Template (SWIT) for public safety radios and dispatch centers. Includes where to find resources and how the templates support consistent radio use across disciplines.
1000 – 1030	Break - Redbird Lobby CHECK OUT TIME!!!
1030 – 1145	Mental Health Strength and Conditioning – Redbird C/D – <i>Cindy McKnight, Kyle Rayome, and Patrick O’Sullivan</i> Explores practical ways to strengthen mental wellness through intentional habits and daily choices. The session focuses on building resilience, self-awareness, and sustainable coping strategies that support long-term well-being.
1145 – 1200	Closing Comments and Wrap Up – The Communications Mentors