"Got Your Back Talk"

MABAS Illinois

Volume 25.1

From the President:

by Chief Don Davids

Greetings to all MABAS Members,

The MABAS training summit was held in Bloomington in February, and it was a great success. We had some great weather, we had excellent turnout and some great speakers. Our attendance was up over last year's summit and that is an increase in attendees for two years in a row. We also had an increase in vendors and sponsors for both summits. I would like to thank all our staff for their hard work and the attendees for their participation.

MABAS committees met on Monday morning of the command summit and worked on their plans and funding requests for the future. While federal funding is somewhat uncertain currently, that does not mean we should not continue to make plans on how to continue to protect the residents of Illinois. The good news is that the State of Illinois has been supportive of MABAS in the past and that seems to be continuing as the federal funding has been paused.

MABAS held an executive board meeting on Tuesday afternoon of the summit, and we had a spectacular attendance. We also had an election for 2nd Vice president and Treasurer, and I am proud to have both Chiefs DeJong and Schweihs continue their roles

We have had some severe weather in some parts of the state that has impacted communities. Thank you to all who have assisted with divisional and inter-divisional requests and please keep those communities in your thoughts.

The OSFM-MABAS 4 gas project has utilized all 385 available monitors, and the application period is closed. Monitors went to departments/districts that applied with budgets under $500,000. The MABAS Operations Chiefs have a small amount left to deliver. Please make sure to calibrate the monitors as needed. The FAQ on the MABAS website has information about that. You may also contact your closest MABAS supported Hazmat team and calibrate there.

Our next executive board meeting is in Wheeling on June 10. Information about time and remote sites will be sent out in advance of the meeting.

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

Respectfully,

Don Davids

President, MABAS-IL

davids@mabas-il.org

www.mabas-il.org

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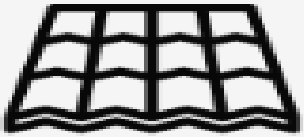
Save The Date:
MABAS Executive Board Meeting
June 10, 2026

Early Spring Home Maintenance CHECKLIST

Gutter Cleaning

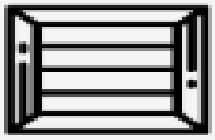
Clean gutters and downspouts by the end of spring. You should also repair any broken or cracked gutter sections.

Check Shingles and Flashing



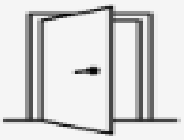
Do a thorough roof inspection, checking for missing shingles.

Inspect Dryer Vent



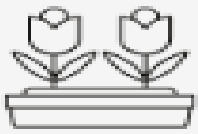
Check your dryer vent for lint clogs, and clean if necessary.

Touch-up Exterior Doors



Lubricate all exterior door hinges and locks.

Prep Flower Beds

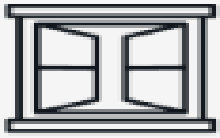


Remove weeds and apply fresh mulch to flower beds.

AC Cleaning & Tune-up

Schedule a cleaning and tune-up with a licensed HVAC contractor.

Window Touch-ups



Oil your windows racks and check weatherstripping and screens.

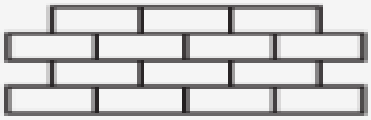
Check Siding

Check your siding for gaps, cracks, missing sections, and pests.

Set Ceiling Fans

Set ceiling fans to counterclockwise.

Check Foundation



Inspect foundation for gaps, cracks, and chips, filling with a silicone caulk.

A Message from MABAS-Illinois

By: Chief Officer Bernie Lyons

First and foremost, on behalf of MABAS staff, I would like to extend our sincere condolences to the family of Chicago Firefighter Michael Altman, as well as to his brothers and sisters in the Chicago Fire Department. As many of you are aware, Firefighter Altman was killed on March 17 while fighting a fire on Chicago's North Side. This tragic loss serves as a solemn reminder of the risks first responders courageously face each day.

As of this writing, the partial shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security continues, leaving MABAS awaiting approvals, reimbursements, and critical planning decisions associated with FEMA's Homeland Security Grant Program.

Despite these challenges, MABAS remains committed to advocating for and securing adequate funding at both the federal and state levels. During the March Congressional Fire and Emergency Symposium in Washington, D.C., MABAS leadership and staff teamed up with members of the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association to meet with Illinois Senators, Representatives, and their respective staff.

These discussions focused on the vital importance of federal grant funding in sustaining Illinois fire and emergency services.

At the state level, MABAS staff traveled to Springfield on March 19 to provide testimony before the House Appropriations–Public Safety and Infrastructure Committee regarding House Bill 4144, sponsored by Representative Mary Beth Canty. This legislation seeks to establish sustainable state funding for MABAS and ILEAS. Our testimony was impactful and well received. MABAS support was impressive, with nearly 400 Witness Slips submitted in favor and none in opposition. However, a critical question remains—identifying a reliable funding source. While a definitive solution has yet to be determined, the hearing brought important attention to the funding challenges facing the Illinois fire service and underscored the need for action from legislators on both sides of the aisle.

Thank you to all who contacted their local State Senators and Representatives, as well as to those who submitted Witness Slips in support of this effort. As we continue to advocate for sustainable funding, your engagement and support remain essential to our success.

CAMP I AM ME
ILLINOIS FIRE SAFETY ALLIANCE

Upcoming Events

MABAS Welcomes Steve DeJong

Administrative Section Chief

Steve DeJong was hired by the Homewood Fire Department on Nov. 27, 2000. DeJong, as a firefighter/paramedic became a highly respected member of several specialized teams during his tenure at the Homewood Fire Department. Those special teams included the department's dive and rescue and hazardous materials teams.

In 2013, DeJong was promoted to lieutenant and later that same year to deputy chief, where he played a key role in leading operations, mentoring personnel and advancing training initiatives within the department.

Beyond Homewood, DeJong served as an instructor for Prairie State College and the University of Illinois, helping to train the next generation of emergency responders. He was also actively involved in the State of Illinois' incident management team and served on several large-scale responses, including the 2019 Southern Illinois floods, Hurricane Ian and the Southwest Border Mission in Chicago.

In addition to his fire service career, DeJong served his country in the United States Army. He enlisted in 1993 and was deployed to Afghanistan from 2004 to 2005, where he was wounded in action and awarded a Purple Heart medal. He later served a second deployment to Iraq from 2007 to 2009 and retired with the rank of Command Sergeant Major in 2015.

Throughout his career, DeJong has demonstrated unwavering professionalism, leadership and dedication to public service. His impact on the Homewood Fire Department and the broader emergency response community will be felt for years to come.

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

#3202

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.

#3264

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.

MABAS Training Summit 2026

Thank you to all that attended and made our annual Training Summit a huge success.

This has been our most successful Summit to date. Please save the date for next year!

February 21-26, 2027

The Yard Foundation

WHO WE ARE

Founded in 2021, The Yard Foundation provides grants to catastrophically injured or ill firefighters, long-term hospitalized children, as well as cancer research and treatment. In 4 years, we've given nearly **4 million dollars** to those in need.

WHY WE HELP

It feels good to do good. We have a large network of firefighters and other supporters willing to "pass the hat" for people in need.

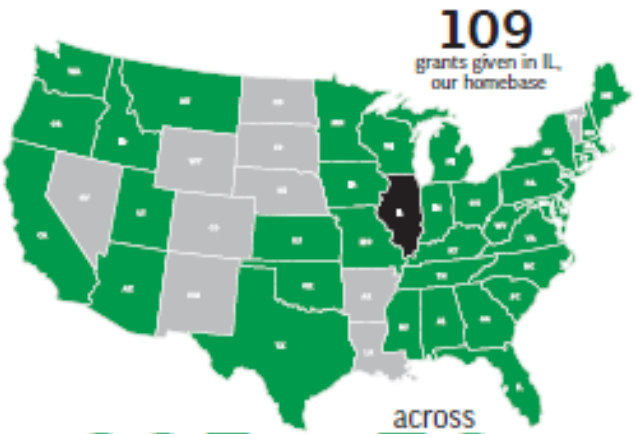
HOW WE DO IT

Fundraising Events
Online Fundraising
The Yard Card Membership
The Swag Shop

WHAT'S NEXT

We are developing relationships with larger donors and corporate sponsors to expand the Giving Tuesday program. Additionally, we are working with fire departments across the country to provide more financial assistance.

OUR 2025 IMPACT



225 grants given across **36** states

TOTAL AMOUNT GIVEN

$1,700,000

AVERAGE GRANT GIVEN $7,500

LARGEST GRANT GIVEN $150,000

WHO WE HELPED

61 Line-of-Duty Related Donations

213 Grants given to support Firefighters

71 Mayday Campaigns

Learn more: theyardfoundation.org

MABAS-IL.ORG

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

2026 MABAS Training Summit Photos

Al Vrshek, Spencer Kimura, Darin Beckman, Jim Klinefelter, Gordon Graham, Chip Wilmot, Dave Fleege, Michael Forrest, John Michalesko

Members of the Kansas Office of State Fire Marshal with Spencer Kimura and Kansas State Association of Fire Chiefs

A Sincere THANK YOU to all of our Vendors for your past support during our 2026 MABAS Training Summit! Looking forward to seeing you in 2027

Diamond level Sponsors

AT&T

ZOLL

FIRSTNET Built with AT&T

Gold Level Sponsor

SAG
FROM SPEC TO MISSION READY
ONE PARTNER

Executive Happy Hour Sponsor

stryker

A Sincere THANK YOU to all of our Vendors for your past support during our 2026 MABAS Training Summit! Looking forward to seeing you in 2027

Copper level Sponsors

MOTOROLA SOLUTIONS

blacklinesafety

CONWAY SHIELD™

Silver Level Sponsor

SALAMANDERLIVE™

A Sincere THANK YOU to all of our Vendors for your past support during our 2026 MABAS Training Summit! Looking forward to seeing you in 2027

Brass level Sponsors

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3G Safety Supply
AAA
AIR ONE EQUIPMENT, INC.
Chi Comm
CONWAY SHIELD
EMS|MC EMS MANAGEMENT & CONSULTANTS
Darley
DINGESFIRE COMPANY
FERNO
FARRWEST
FEDERAL SIGNAL
PUBLIC RISK UNDERWRITERS VFIS/Midwest
first due
SAG
MACQUEEN EQUIPMENT
MACQUEEN EMERGENCY
RRESTORE Disaster Restoration Experts
railsidecitrus INSURANCE AGENCY a fresh approach to insurance
SCBAS INC.
stryker
Vector Solutions
PUBLIC RISK UNDERWRITERS VFIS/Midwest
WESTERN SHELTER
The Yard Foundation
xybix

A Sincere THANK YOU to all of our Vendors for your past support during our 2026 MABAS Training Summit! Looking forward to seeing you in 2027

Brass level Sponsors

1-800-BoardUp
Victim Services • Securing Buildings • Protecting People & Property

Trifecta Solutions Inc.

Illinois Fire Chiefs Association

AQUAEYE

Chicago Communications LLC
We Create The Infrastructure Behind Mobility®
A CSE Crosscom Company

PARATECH®

HIEBA SYSTEM SOLUTIONS

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DLX RAPID DEPLOYMENT REDEFINED.

GENESIS RESCUE SYSTEMS

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TC Tablet Command

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FARRWEST

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SENTINEL EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS

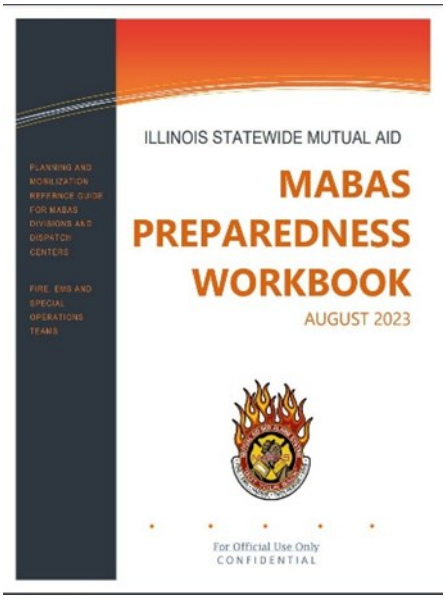
LDV CUSTOM SPECIALTY VEHICLES

E-ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTIONS
YOUR SOLUTION TO HAZMAT MITIGATION

Jefferson FIRE & SAFETY

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-TF1 Operational Report

As of April 15, 2026

USAR Branch Chief Joe Moore

IL-TF1 Operational Report - 3/16/2026 to 4/15/2026

Accomplishments:

March Swim Testing at Carl Sandburg High School - Orland Park

- March 24 and 25, 2026 - 18 attendees
- Moved to match Spring Break / Pool Availability
- Due to the move, others are using their annual divisional test.

Canine Weekly Training

- March 18 - 6 Attendees
- March 25 - 3 Attendees
- April 1 - 5 Attendees
- April 15 - 3 Attendees

April Mobilization Process Testing / Travel to Du Page County Fair Grounds

- April 8 with IEMA Region 2 and 3 Comms Exercise
- April 9 stop by Hugh Stott (Ret. West Chicago FPD and ILTF1 Plans 2)
- 95 Attendees over the two drill days

Alert Status on April 3 and 4 - NWS Severe Storms Northern Illinois

Alert Status on April 14 and 14 - NWS Severe Storms Northern Illinois

IL-TF1 Operational Report

As of April 15, 2026

USAR Branch Chief Joe Moore

Upcoming Activities - Drills

April Training Plans

- April 16 - USAR 5 and USAR 6 to the IESMA conference
- Canine Weekly Drill 22, 29
- Logistics ORE with 10 Florida Task Forces in Orlando - April 27 to April 30

May Training Plans

- Operational Readiness Exercise (ORE) May 4, 5, and 6, 2026- Type III Team
    - Illinois National Guard to assist with 5 soldiers
    - Use of Grounds approved through the CBERF Grant
    - Type III of 40, 5 Evaluators and 5 ING - Total of 50
- Oglesby, IL - Floodwater exercise - May 7, 2026
    - ILTF1 Type 3 Swiftwater Team of 6
- Canine Weekly Drill or Training in New York at NY-TF1
    - Weekly Drills May 13, 20, and 27
    - NY-TF1 Training May 17 to 22
- Water/Swiftater Training - May 28 and 29 - Yorkville

2026 Upcoming Events/Requests

- October 20 to 23 - 4 State Operational Readiness Exercise in Muscatatuck, IN - Type 3
- October 10 & 11 - Search Dog Foundation - Canine Live Find Testing - In IL - TBD
- October 8 to 10 - Boone County Disaster Drill - Type 1 team requested

IL-TF1 Operational Report

As of April 15, 2026

USAR Branch Chief Joe Moore

PICTURES FROM APRIL MOBEX TRAININGS

Type 3 team at DuPage County Fairgrounds

Check in at DuPage County Fairgrounds

DuPage County Courthouse in the background

IL-TF1 Operational Report

As of April 15, 2026

USAR Branch Chief Joe Moore

100 Club Valor Awards: April 7, 2026.

Lt. Rick Kraus, Alsip Fire Department (IL-TF1 Search Team Manager) & Lt. Mark Hogan, Orland Fire Protection District (IL-TF1 Rescue Squad Officer) - for a rope rescue off the side of a bridge - a civilian who had landed injured on a bridge abutment 60ft above the Cal Sag Canal.

Alsip Fire Department with Lt. Kraus

100 Club and recipients

Orland FPD with Lt. Hogan

MABAS Trivia

The picture below is of a MABAS "apparatus"

What is its MABAS given name?

A. All terrain utility vehicle

B. Mission Support Unit

C. Polaris Ranger

D. Off road buggie

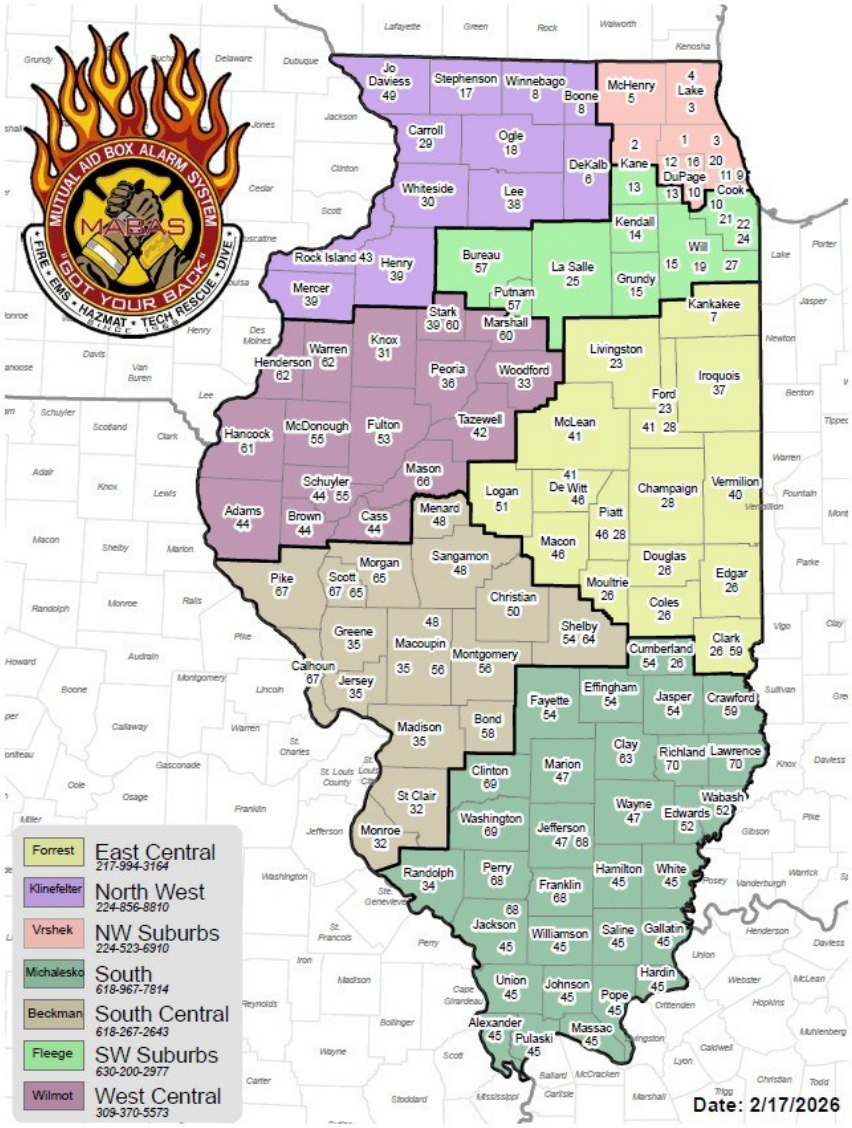
The answer will be in the July's Newsletter! Answer for January's newsletter is on the following page.

The answer to all of our questions can be found at

www.mabas-il.org

MABAS Division Map

With Operation Branch Chiefs



For More Information

MABAS, Illinois

847-403-0500

LIKE US ON facebook

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

JANUARY'S TRIVIA QUESTION ANSWER

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SUPPORT MORGUE TRUCK

CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION

American Red Cross | Disaster Action Team

Emergency Response Guide to Working with the American Red Cross

For Red Cross Disaster Assistance 24/7/365, please call 833.583.3111.

Why call the Red Cross?

When individuals experience a disaster, they face many new unknowns. We can help with the immediate disaster-caused needs of individuals, families and communities. You should call us when those impacted by disasters are in need of:

- A safe place to stay
- Food and clothing replacement
- Assistance with lost eyeglasses, medications and medical equipment
- Mental health and/or spiritual care support

Red Cross services can be helpful for anyone who has experienced a home fire; the home doesn't have to be a complete loss. We will quickly respond to assess their immediate needs and provide help. This includes facilitating access to community resources and financial assistance when eligible, and stepping in as an advocate for families/individuals on their road to recovery.

What to Expect

Red Cross Disaster Action Teams are available 24/7/365, in person or virtually. Please call us *any time* a family/individual has a home fire. We will dispatch the closest available Red Cross Disaster Action Team to meet with them and assess their immediate needs. The following information will help us expedite our assistance:

- Household information: address; household members (including adults, children, pets); names
- Current status: information regarding injuries or fatalities; extent of damage to the home; whether or not they have a safe place to go
- Contact information: phone number for member of household; contact info for on-scene responder

Red Cross services are free and available to everyone who has experienced a disaster including a home fire. As part of our humanitarian mission, we provide support regardless of race, religion or citizenship status.

Fire Prevention Award Nominations

Each year Camp I Am Me presents awards to nominated individuals, groups, firefighters, life safety educators, and others for their tremendous efforts in promoting fire safety and burn prevention within their community. Award recipients are highlighted at the annual Fire Prevention Week Luncheon, held in October.

Below is the nomination criteria for each award category:

Corporate Responsibility Award: This award is given to a corporation that has responsibly gone above and beyond the norm by providing fire safety or burn prevention education to the public.

Life Safety Award: This award is given to an individual, fire department, or organization that has achieved a pattern of excellence through a fire safety or burn prevention program they developed, implemented, and has resulted in positive life safety results amongst their constituents.

Special Recognition Award: This award is given to an individual who has established a pattern of fire safety and prevention efforts within their community.

Wayne Luecht Memorial Award: This award is granted to an individual who has established a pattern of excellence through a Fire Safety or Burn Prevention Program that has benefited the public outside of their jurisdiction. A person has also excelled in his or her duties while leading the Fire Service to recognize Public Education as an important tool. An individual who has been judged by their peers to possess the qualities and superior work ethics that others strive to emulate.

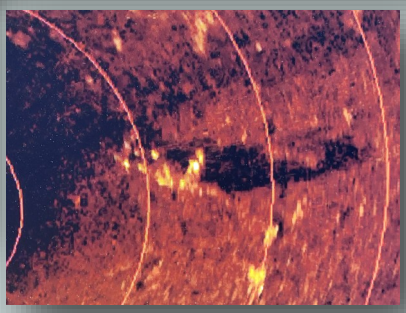
Nominations can be submitted at any time but must be received by Camp I Am Me no later than August 15th to be considered for the current year. Scan the QR Code to complete the nomination online. Additional information can be found at www.IFSA.org/FPWL.

NOMINATE SOMEONE

Web Link: www.ifsa.org/prevention-resources/fpwl/nominations

MABAS Division's 32, 45, 56 & 68 Incident

On January 26, 2026, New Baden Fire Department along with other Division assets responded to a report of a person that fell thru the ice on a lake and went under. Numerous assets were deployed including local water response teams and two dive teams. The incident was terminated for the night due to darkness and weather conditions with a plan to resume the next morning. On 01/27/26, Division assets along with the Water Team and Dive Teams from Divisions 56 and 68, and the MABAS Mobile Support Unit South began a recovery operation. Teams were able to locate and recover the victim late in the afternoon. Fire Service assets were assisted by Illinois Department of Natural Resources officers and assets.



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 it's 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 CORNER

PRESENTS THE 2021

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!

QUESTIONS? service@eagle-engraving.com | 630-377-1056 | eagle-engraving.com

STATE OF ILLINOIS
PRELIMINARY EXPOSURE REDUCTION PROJECT

FREE DECON EQUIPMENT
AVAILABLE TO ILLINOIS FIRE DEPARTMENTS

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 littlefield@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

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

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.

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