



**Wisconsin Fire Inspectors Association**

*Dedicated to the prevention of fire through  
Fire Inspection and Public Education*

Wisconsin Chapter Report  
International Fire Marshal Association  
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**Do You Have Enough Resources?**

Since I had the honor of attending the PARADE conference at the National Fire Academy this past May, I have begun to realize the vast amount of resources that are available to fire departments throughout this country. The networking and sharing of ideas that occurred at this conference was phenomenal. This was the first time I attended PARADE and was truly a little apprehensive, feeling as though I would be completely out of my element. When I arrived, I realized my preconceived notions were incorrect, as not one individual made me feel out of place. From the introductory meeting to the regional meetings, I felt like one of the team. I'd like to thank Ron Farr for making the effort to include numerous IFMA chapters in this conference. Ron's intention was to have a few chosen people bring back the information and be able to disseminate it to the people that would use it. He had the foresight to realize sending people from the IFMA would accomplish this. There might have been some resistance from the governing staff, but I feel that Ron's intentions were right on the money. I can say for the State of Wisconsin that the information and contacts established from PARADE will be disseminated throughout our state. This experience was so beneficial that I feel it should be expanded to more than one representative from each state or metro area.

What goes on behind the scenes is something again I have had the privilege to experience. What might this be? Look on your shelves – you have numerous codebooks with the most prevalent being NFPA. I was invited to attend a Central Technical Code Committee meeting in Wisconsin. As I was sitting in this meeting I witnessed the great deal of work that goes into the modification or drafting of new code language. We use these documents on a daily basis, but do not fully understand the complex process that goes into writing them. It does not stop there. Someone may propose a change or new language, but the committee then as a whole scrutinizes and adjusts it so that it becomes a viable document. Again I felt intimidated but when I did voice an opinion they were very respectful to my viewpoint. This is why the process works. While I attended the annual conference in Boston I saw the culmination of many groups hard work as they came before the body for voting on the changing or establishing of new codes. The membership body voted on each and every change. Some of them were successful while others failed. Again this is why the system works, it is a consensus of the membership,

and sometimes it requires compromise, tedious work, and patience. These experiences taught me many lessons and will definitely benefit the State of Wisconsin.

My point here is this. Everyone is understaffed. We spend day after day chasing our tails trying to keep up with the mandates of local, state and federal laws. Find some time to get involved in the processes at a higher level. IFMA offers many opportunities to connect with colleagues from all over the country. Take advantage of the wisdom and expertise of others. Why reinvent the wheel when someone before you already has. Some day, others will look to all of us for that wisdom and expertise.

Speaking of resources, Wisconsin Fire Inspectors has our combined annual conference October 29- November 2, 2007 in Eau Claire, WI. Please visit our web site at [WWW.WSFIA.org](http://WWW.WSFIA.org) for more information.

Respectively submitted

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