



Election 2025 IAAI Candidates for Board of Directors



Christopher J. Ward (IL) IAAI Candidate for Second Vice President

Elections will be open until noon (EDT) April 7, the results will be announced at the 2025 ITC General Meeting and on www.firearson.com.

How long have you been a member of the IAAI? 28 Years joined 10-6-1996

How many annual meetings have you attended; Which Years?

- 2014 Annual General Meeting Las Vegas, NV
- 2015 Annual General Meeting Chciago, IL
- 2017 Annual General Meeting Frisco, TX
- 2018 Annual General Meeting Las Vegas, NV
- 2019 Annual General Meeting Jacksonville, FL
- 2020 Virtual General Meeting
- 2021 Virtual General Meeting
- 2022 Annual General Meeting Jacksonville, FL
- 2023 Annual General Meeting Cherokee, NC
- 2024 Annual General Meeting Las Vegas, NV

What IAAI Committees Have you Served on; which years?

- Chairman of the IAAI Chapters Committee
- Co-Chair IAAI Social Media Committee
- Committee members IAAI Insurance committee
- Chair Arson Registry Task Group
- Chair Enhanced Chapters Task Group
- Executive Director Search Committee

Do you regularly attend your state/provincial chapter meetings and activities? Yes

Offices held state/province chapter?

- President Illinois Chapter IAAI
- Vice-President Illinois Chapter of the IAAI
- 2 term Director Illinois IAAI
- Illinois IAAI T/E Chairman
- Illinois IAAI CFI Committee Chairman

Please list any international offices held, special projects or committee work, indicating years of service.

- 2-Full Term IAAI Director 2019-Present
- Chairman of the IAAI Chapters Committee 2019-Present
- Co-Chair IAAI Social Media Committee 2019-Present
- Committee members IAAI Insurance committee 2015-Present
- Chair Arson Registry Task Group 2022-Present
- Chair Enhanced Chapters Task Group 2024-Present
- Executive Director Search Committee 2023-2024

Describe, in 100 words or less, why you feel you are qualified for this position: I am currently a Director with the IAAI elected in 2019 at the Jacksonville ITC and would like to continue my work on behalf of our membership. I am currently the Chairman of the IAAI Chapters Committee which oversees all 83 Chapters of the IAAI. I have also spearheaded our organization to reevaluate our direction and start the process of formulating a new strategic plan for our organization which will guide us through the next 5, 10 and 15 years. As an organization we must have a clear direction forward to assist our organization move forward which will directly benefit our members.

What would you say your greatest assets are if you become a director or officer of the IAAI? I believe some of my best leadership traits are my work ethic, my communication skills and building trust and working relationships with others. I believe in leading by example and dedicating the needed time and effort into accomplishing the IAAI goals. Working with others for a common goal and success of OUR organization is paramount to the success of OUR organization.

What type of leader are you, and how would you apply those leadership traits as a director or officer of the IAAI? I believe I have demonstrated throughout my tenure on the IAAI and Illinois Board that I believe in Our association, Our Chapters and Our Members by my work ethic, my actions and my word. I believe in expanding Our association for the direct benefit of our members. To always work in the best interest of Our Chapters and Our Members. To keep moving Our association forward in a positive direction. To meet the challenges we face head on and to work for solutions that are always in the best interest of our members.

What steps do you believe the iaaI should take to reduce or eliminate membership shrinkage? We need to first and foremost introduce procedures in the IAAI office to properly notify our members when they are nearing their renewal dates for membership prior to expiring. In the IAAI office we need to follow-up with members that have expired memberships and reach out to them directly to discuss the benefits of memberships and find out why they are expired. As our industry grows older we are going to loss members. We must look to the younger generation and promote the benefits to the IAAI. We are currently working with the student membership group to promote the IAAI in colleges across the country. We need to work with Chapters to promote the benefit of joining there local chapters by providing scholarships to these students to assist them in their career path moving forward.

What steps do you believe the IAAI should take to grow membership? We must first work with our Chapters to grow our membership within our chapters and the IAAI organically. We need to reintroduce the IAAI offering a 50% percent discount to all new members joining the IAAI that attend there Chapters AGM/Annual Training Conference. We need to look into expanding membership benefits to all members. I am also currently working with numerous countries internationally on forming new IAAI Chapters around the world. In the private sector, we need to enhance our relationship with private sector organizations in the insurance industry such as IASIU, NASP, NSPII and others to expand our outreach to attract new members. We need to look into expanding our continuing education for Law Enforcement and Insurance professional so they can use the IAAI to obtain the needed Continuing Education credits they need in the performance of their work.

How would you propose to improve relationships and communications between the international and chapters? As the Chairman of the IAAI Chapters Committee it is my GOAL to improve or relationship and outreach in working directly with our chapters. As a committee we have made changes within our Chapter Liaisons to improve our relationship with our Chapters. We meet quarterly with our Chapter Presidents and their boards to keep the lines of communications open. These meetings have been well attended, but I will not be happy until all 83 Chapters are in attendance at these meetings. The most important asset we have as an organization is our Chapters and our membership. We must work to support our Chapters by working with them to get low cost trainings into their chapters with a cost sharing to grow our chapters. We need to promote expanding the courtroom testimony and evidence technician certifications by having vetted instructors in our chapters to host these programs in the chapters so our members can obtain the necessary classes for certification.

What is your vision for the future for the IAAI? Growth! We must look to expanding our training and our membership across the IAAI. We need to align the strategic plan of the IAAI to meet the needs of our membership. We need to reevaluate our committees and bring in new members to bring new ideas. We need to work with our committees to work in the best interest of our Chapters and our membership.

Other than training fire investigators, what two or three other elements do you consider as critical to the mission of the IAAI? The IAAI needs to be the leader in advancing the science related to fire investigation worldwide. The IAAI needs to look to partner more with the ATF, Department of Justice, NIST and UL labs and the international community to continue the research and testing associated with our profession. We are making great strides with our Health and Safety Committee to improve the health and safety of our public and private sector membership. With that being said we can always keep moving the ball forward and advancing our outreach and research to protect the health and safety of our members.

What do you perceive is the biggest challenge facing the IAAI in the coming years and how would you address that challenge? Budgetary constraints of our members. As we have seen prices are going up throughout the world. Many public sector fire and law enforcement and private sector budgets are being cut. This is directly effecting our members paying for membership dues and attending training offered by the IAAI. Many agencies are cutting their budgets and no longer paying for IAAI membership or for attending training, due to the high cost of overtime, travel, etc.. We must look for ways to embrace technology to provide the continued training for our membership. We need to embrace offering virtual training events as well as options for attending the IAAI ITC virtually in the future.