



The

Winter 2021

# COMMUNIQUE

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The  
**COMMUNIQUE**  
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Directors Association

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### MISSION

To serve and strengthen through the provision and coordination of timely information, education, and legislation.

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# **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

**by Curtis Hoopes**  
**OFDDA President**

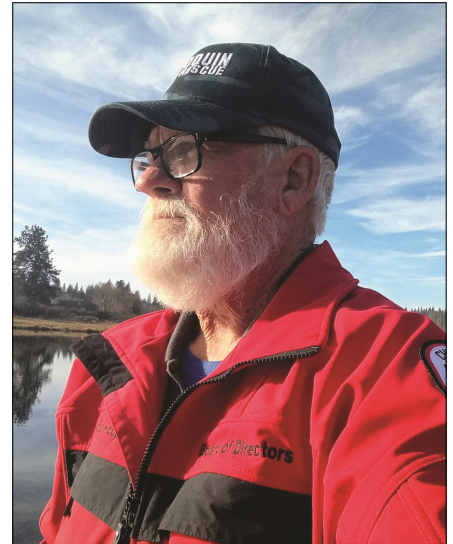
I am honored and privileged to serve again as your 2022 President of the Oregon Fire District Directors Association. I take this responsibility seriously. Together, we will continue to build on the solid foundation of our past presidents and boards.

I am pleased to announce the success of our 2021 Oregon Fire Service Conference held in Ashland. For those who attended in person, it was a pleasure to meet with you all. Thank you to the presenters, staff, vendors, and sponsors for their efforts to provide needed and useful training and information to member districts.

This past year presented many challenges for fire districts and their governing boards: wildfires, COVID-19, and shutdowns. These challenges continue to be met and overcome, ensuring ongoing first-responder services to the citizens in the districts we serve. The knowledge and teamwork required for our local boards to function requires ongoing education and training. Along with our current staff and in continued partnership with SDIS/SDAO, OFDDA offers additional board training opportunities. Hopefully in 2022, we can go about our business as in the past, “normally.” In-person training sessions, board meetings, and staff interactions are all things we look forward to next year.

OFDDA continues to provide a strong voice in Salem for district directors through our OFDDA staff. In 2022, we will see a short session of the Oregon Legislature scheduled. Be assured that OFDDA will remain fully involved in monitoring the legislation and providing input from and information to our members, as stated in our mission: “strengthen through providing timely information, education, and legislation.”

In conclusion, I look forward to serving you in the coming year—hopefully, interacting and meeting with you in person in Hood River at our annual training conference in November 2022. Continue to be safe out there and support our family of first responders as they serve our communities.



**MERRY CHRISTMAS, HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

## Introducing: New 2022 OFDDA Board Members

**Cheryl Johnson**  
Director—Position #5  
Illinois Valley Fire District



Cheryl Azevedo Johnson has been a resident of the Illinois Valley since 2003 and has served on the Board of Directors for the Illinois Valley Fire District since December 2019. In November 2020, she was

appointed board secretary. In July 2021, she was elected board president. She had previously volunteered for IVFD as a member of their CERT team from 2015 to 2017. Cheryl also serves the community with her involvement with other non-profit organizations, including the IV Safe House Alliance as their board president. In her professional career, Cheryl is a certified leadership facilitator. She works as a leadership consultant and a personal coach. She enjoyed a 20-year career in human resources prior to starting her own business. In her free time, Cheryl enjoys her 40 acres of forested land in southwestern Oregon, where she can be found tending to her orchard, vegetable, and flower gardens.

**Jon Peasley**  
Director—Position #6  
Yamhill Fire Protection District



Hi, my name is Jon Peasley. I started on the Yamhill Fire Department in 1984 as a Volunteer. I became an EMT basic in 1990. Over the years I became less active as a Volunteer Firefighter. I am still active in the department by being on the board of directors. I became a board member of the Yamhill Fire Protection District in 2011. On a personal level, my wife and I own approximately 50 acres within a few miles of Yamhill. We have horses, cows, chickens, cats, and a dog. My hobbies include camping, hunting, fishing, and playing with my grandkids. We like to travel to Arizona for a bit in the winter, not full-time snowbirds, but just long enough to have a little fun. Some day soon I hope to travel Route 66 in my 1946 Ford pickup that is currently being restored.

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## Can You Help? Unit Needed!

The Carlton Police Department needs a gas ambulance in good condition with lights and sirens that could be donated to its department for a Mobile Command Center. Carlton PD has an operational diesel unit (shown in photos) for trade and/or donation to another agency.

Please contact Kevin J Martinez, Chief of Police, at 503-852-3805 or [kmartinez@ci.carlton.or.us](mailto:kmartinez@ci.carlton.or.us) if you can help.



## The Legal Beagle

### Are Your Public Meeting Policies Up to Date?

*by Ross M. Williamson  
Local Government Law Group P.C.*

This article addresses two public meeting topics that likely need attention in your policies and practices. The first topic is a result of recent 2021 legislation. The second topic is a result of bringing Oregon's 1970s-era laws into the twenty-first century.

#### **House Bill 2560 (2021)**

House Bill 2560 is legislation adopted during the 2021 legislative session. With this legislation, effective January 1, 2022, the public meetings law will require, to the extent reasonably possible, districts to allow for virtual or electronic participation in meetings. Electronic participation includes participation via telephone, video, or other electronic or virtual means. This provision applies even if the public meeting is otherwise being held fully in person.

The legislation does not go into detail as to when it is "reasonably possible" to grant a request to participate electronically. It is likely a fact-centered analysis based upon the burden of the specific request balanced against the ability of the district to accommodate the request. In most cases, it would not be a burden on the district to allow someone to participate via telephone, so



long as the district has prior notice from the person wishing to participate.

I encourage districts to explore their options for allowing electronic participation. There are many low-cost options available in the current marketplace. Refusing to explore electronic options would not be a reason to deny a request by a member of the public to participate electronically. In addition, districts should develop procedures to make this option known to the public and develop a procedure for the handling of such requests.

*Continues on page 6.*

### **News Media Attending Executive Sessions**

While not a new issue, I have seen a rise in concern surrounding the issue of members of the news media attending executive sessions. It is worth reviewing district policies to make sure the district has a game plan in place for addressing requests by the media to attend an upcoming executive session.

The issue that should be addressed in your policies is that despite being closed to the general public, Oregon public meetings law permits news media representatives to attend most executive sessions. The question faced by districts is how to tell if someone requesting access to an executive session is really a member of the news media.

Under the public meetings law, except in limited scenarios, a district may not exclude members of the news media who represent an “institutional news media entity” from executive sessions. An institutional news media entity is an entity that is formally organized for the purpose of gathering and disseminating news. This definition includes traditional news media entities such as newspapers, radio stations, and television programs. It also includes newer types of media entities such as websites, blogs, and podcasts. The institutional nature of a news media entity may be difficult to discern, especially when the entity is of a newer type.

In Oregon, we are without case law to help us. The current consensus thinking is that a “representative of the news media” is someone who gathers news and who has a formal affiliation, whether through employment, by contract, or some other agency authorization from or with an institutional news media entity, including both general interest media and media that cover specific subject areas for special audiences.

Districts should have a policy in place that defines the process and procedure for determining whether someone is a representative of the news media. The policy can consider the following points:

- Set out the existing recognized news media entities in the community.
- Establish a process for other entities to be recognized by the district.
- Establish a process for news reporters to attend meetings (e.g., production of credentials).
- Specifically provide that recording devices are not allowed in executive sessions.

With more and more non-traditional news outlets springing to life, I encourage districts to work with their legal counsel to ensure procedures are put in place.



# 2022 SDAO Annual Conference: *Credit Opportunities for Fire District Directors Academy*

by Jennifer Quisenberry,  
Director of Membership Services  
Administrators for SDIS, OPPA, and PACE  
Direct: 503-798-9245 | Fax: 503-371-4781

Registration is now open for the 2022 SDAO Annual Conference! This year's hybrid event will offer the opportunity to attend either in person or virtually, with all sessions recorded and made available to **all attendees** after the event. If you miss a session or want to rewatch a session, we've got you covered! All recordings will be available on the virtual platform and conference app.

The conference will take place in beautiful Eugene, Oregon, at the Graduate Hotel or virtually in the comfort of your own space. With 20 educational sessions and multiple opportunities for interacting with colleagues through business meetings, caucus meetings, networking receptions, and more, you will want to be sure to join us.



We will be offering several opportunities to receive credit for the **SDAO/OFDDA Fire District Directors Academy**. To get a preview of which sessions will offer credit, visit our website at [www.sdao.com/annual-conference](http://www.sdao.com/annual-conference) and download the conference brochure.

Due to state mandated COVID-19 restrictions, masks, face coverings, or face shields will be required at the conference. If you are unwilling or unable to wear a mask, face covering, or face shield, we encourage you to participate as a virtual attendee.

## More Information and How to Register

Registration is now open and available online through our conference registration website. Please visit <https://cvent.me/M7d58o> to register and for more information, including session descriptions, speaker information, and more. **Limited on-site spots are available, so we encourage you to register soon.**

## Registration Rates for SDAO Members and SDIS Agents

| On-Site (at the Graduate Eugene)  | Virtual (on the CVENT AttendeeHub platform & app)*   |
|---|--|
| Pre-Conference Session (Full Day): <b>\$85</b><br>Pre-Conference Session (Half Day): <b>\$50</b><br>One-Day Only Experience (Friday or Saturday): <b>\$140</b><br>Full On-Site Experience (Thursday evening through Sunday morning): <b>\$230</b> | Pre-Conference Session (Full Day): <b>\$35</b><br>Pre-Conference Session (Half Day): <b>\$20</b><br>Full Virtual Experience (Friday and Saturday): <b>\$75</b> |

\*Not all sessions may be available live. However, all sessions will be recorded and posted to the virtual platform and app at the conclusion of the conference.

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### Hotel Information

There are two blocks of rooms at the Graduate Eugene where the conference will be held. We encourage you to try the per diem room block first for the better rate. Once that rate has reached its limit, you can use the other room block. Please make your reservation as soon as possible if you plan to attend the conference.

Per Diem Rate Block: \$109 +  
tax/night: Room Block Code –  
SDAO0222 | Group Booking Link:  
<https://bit.ly/3FNCo9Z>  
General Block: \$149 + tax/night:  
Room Block Code – SDAOT0222  
| Group Booking Link:  
<https://bit.ly/3oW7ICc>

*Rates and availability subject to change. Room block may expire if sold out before reservation deadline. **Room block rate expires January 10, 2022.***

### Cancellation

Registrations for the on-site experience must be canceled by January 25, 2022, for a full refund. Virtual registrations must be canceled by February 8, 2022, for a full refund. No shows, for either attendance option, will be charged the full registration amount. To cancel your registration, you may do so using the link in your confirmation email or by contacting SDAO Member Services at [memberservices@sdao.com](mailto:memberservices@sdao.com) or 800-285-5461.

### Questions

Please contact SDAO Member Services at [memberservices@sdao.com](mailto:memberservices@sdao.com) or 800-285-5461 with any questions or concerns.



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**A special *Thank You* to SDAO, title sponsor of the 2021 Oregon Fire Service Conference in Ashland, Oregon!**



## 2021 Oregon Fire Service Conference Recap and Awards



The OFDDA Board and staff appreciate our many members, instructors, and sponsors who gathered in person and online to participate in this year's conference. Together, we celebrated a step toward normalcy. We also enjoyed high-level training provided by respected speakers, beginning with a powerful keynote address from Kris "Tanto" Paronto. **Thank you to those who made this conference not only possible but a wonderful success!**

### 2021 OFDDA President's Award

The purpose of this award is to recognize those individuals who have exhibited an outstanding contribution to the Fire Service in Oregon. This year's award goes to someone who has made a personal investment in OFDDA by committing many hours of personal time to the Association, as a leader, a mentor, an organizer of fundraisers, and as a collaborator with other fire service partners.

Please join me in congratulating OFDDA Past President John Dunn, our 2021 recipient.



### 2021 Innovative Safety Award

The OFDDA Innovative Safety Award celebrates a district that successfully implemented innovation improving the safety of the department, community, Oregonians, or others outside the state.

This year's award went to Keizer Fire for its ability to adapt to the COVID-19 cancellation of its annual Open House by generating printed materials explaining fire safety information in English and Spanish that was sent home with K-5 students in the Keizer Fire District. These materials outlined how to get a free smoke alarm, a contest for students, and fire safety goodies.

### 2021 District of the Year Award

The OFDDA District of the Year Award is for the following purposes:

- To provide a means of sharing information, innovative ideas, and the variety of activities taking place throughout the state of Oregon.
- To give recognition to those in the fire service who have demonstrated progressive achievement.
- To benefit all fire districts, regardless of size, location, budget, or number of personnel.

Yamhill Fire Protection District won the 2021 award for its successful recruitment and retention practices, involvement with community events, and its volunteers' consistent activity in conflagrations, including 8 deployments in 2021.



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## Seismic Rehabilitation Grants Accepting Applications



The **Seismic Rehabilitation Grant Program** is accepting applications from **December 1, 2021, until February 28, 2022 at 5 pm**. All of the forms needed to apply can be found online at [www.oregon.gov/biz/programs/SRGP/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/biz/programs/SRGP/Pages/default.aspx).

If you need any further information please contact our Program Coordinator, Gloria Zacharias, at [gloria.zacharias@biz.oregon.gov](mailto:gloria.zacharias@biz.oregon.gov) or 503-986-0132.

## 2022 OFDDA Membership Renewal

OFDDA membership renewal invoices will be mailed in January. The dues structure for each district is based upon its assessed value as recorded in the Oregon Department of Revenue Property Tax Statistics. Members enjoy many benefits, including:

- ◇ Representation on public safety issues before the legislature
- ◇ Assistance with public meeting laws, statute searches, ethics questions, budgets, district formation, elections, etc.
- ◇ Receipt of *The Communiqué*, OFDDA's quarterly newsletter
- ◇ Reduced registration cost of attendance at the OFDDA Conference each November
- ◇ Recognition of Districts and Board Members
- ◇ Training opportunities
- ◇ Reduced Length of Service Award Program fees
- ◇ Board member support
- ◇ Governor's appointments