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About the Cover . . .

Introducing the 2006-2007 IMSA Executive Committee – pictured in the center photo from left to right are Craig MacKenzie, Lenny Addair, Greg Bothwell, Norm Akin, Bill Moroski and Don Fullerton. Missing from the center photo is Aron Larson.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello Friends and Associates of IMSA,

For those of you that don't know me, my name is Norm Akin and I was recently elected President of the IMSA's Executive Committee at the International Conference in Overland Park, Kansas. I am also Director of the Arizona IMSA Section.



Norm Akin

It is a real honor to serve as your President, and I look forward to the numerous challenges and opportunities the upcoming year will offer. The first challenge I had to undertake was the appointment of members to the plethora of IMSA committees. This task helps you appreciate just how many dedicated volunteers there are helping our Association be the best of its kind anywhere. The second task, and one of many to come, was writing this President's report for the IMSA Journal.

I sat down to write this article one morning toward the end of August. As I stared at the computer screen contemplating the definition of writer's block (can you get it after three paragraphs?), I was jolted back to reality when a lightning bolt struck a eucalyptus tree not a hundred yards from my office. I was getting out from under my desk, and marveling at how well adrenaline can sharpen your thought processes, when it began to pour down rain. In Arizona, during monsoon season, morning rains usually portend big problems.

The storm continued to build with thunder booming every few minutes and rain obscuring my view of the smoldering eucalyptus tree. I could hear the phones ringing off the hook in our front office, which meant that our traffic crews were in for one hell of a day. Now my phone was ringing, it's PD dispatch letting us know that the irrigation utility is going to release 500 CFS into the wash. I can tell from the background noise that they were being inundated with calls. Never the less the dispatcher I spoke with was calm and collected, relaying the information quickly, concisely and courteously.

I could remember a time when this situation would start my stomach churning, worrying about what could go wrong. However, today I am perfectly at ease, and that's because I know the City is in the capable hands of dedicated, hard working, IMSA certified technicians that can handle any emergency. That sure makes my job a lot easier.

By the end of this storm we were making national news with CNN showing motorists being rescued from the normally dry Indian Bend wash. I was pleased to see our solar powered, flood warning flashers working just fine over the signs that say, "Do not enter when flooded". These signs help our Police Department enforce the "Stupid Motorist Law". The law makes the stranded motorist responsible for the cost of their rescue. These flasher systems have been featured in the IMSA Journal, as a matter of fact.

The IMSA plays a strong role in our employee development, training and certification. It is also the backbone for a great network. With members from other agencies, contracting companies and vendors always willing to help one another. In fact, after a microburst earlier in the week a special tie rod supported mast arm was twisted off one of our few multi-use poles. The City didn't have a replacement in stock, but after one phone call to our friend Ron Dubek at the City of Phoenix, we were able to borrow one immediately.

This monsoon drenched day in Arizona helped remind me of the value that well trained public safety employees bring to the community. While Police and Fire personnel get their well-deserved recognition, it is sometimes frustrating that the average citizen does not recognize the role traffic technicians, dispatchers, and fire alarm personnel play in keeping them safe.

I guess that is why I am willing to volunteer my time and efforts to the IMSA. It gives me way to help the members of our professions who perform indispensable public safety services, often working in obscurity, in dangerous environments and with little recognition.

I am so impressed with, and proud of, the numerous volunteer IMSA Officers and Committee members who put their hearts and souls into the job of growing and improving the IMSA. And the glue that keeps it all together is the IMSA Office staff who truly put forth a Herculean effort to keep the business of the IMSA running smoothly and efficiently (more unsung heroes!).

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In closing I would like to say that the IMSA is in excellent health both financially and organizationally. Prior leadership has set the association on a course to success. We have become an Association with 10,000 members, much improved certification programs, and a course monitoring system to keep them up to date. We have strong partnerships with other organizations and are well represented to the FHWA. Some of our current goals are to strengthen Strategic Management and plan for the future, look for ways to bring education and training to our members through on-line resources, and create a shared library of training material.

Until next time stay safe and take care.

Norm Akin



CERTIFICATION CORNER . . .

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people that are involved, the stronger we will be. The members will make the difference, and I will do everything to address any concerns you have. If you're moderating a class and find a problem, please write it down and forward it to the Director of Education to send to the committee. WE WILL FIX IT!

We have recently reached a new agreement with a consultant to review some of our material. This agreement seems to have everything we need in place and seems very promising. So let's get things going and see.

I am very proud to be on board with this fine organization as representative of the Southwestern Section. I look forward to the opportunity to work with Greg, Lenny, and Sharon (our Director of Education). I would like to make this world a safer place for my children and yours. I want to make a difference. I hope you will help me. Thanks again for the opportunity to serve you!

Terry Thompson



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