



For Immediate Release

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IDHS Hires New Assistant State Fire Marshal

Jim Bennett, an experienced firefighter and chief, is Indiana's new assistant state fire marshal.

Bennett's duties will include coordinating the daily activities of the emergency services branch of the Indiana Department of Homeland Security Fire and Building Safety Division, emergency medical services, fire investigation and hazardous material response. He also will oversee government and inter-agency communication and relations, and will be a liaison between the state and local fire departments.

"I'm excited about my new position," Bennett said. "And will do my best to keep the people of Indiana safe."

His job goals include volunteer firefighter retention and expanding emergency services to include training for incidents of terrorism.

Bennett was a 35-year firefighter at the Connersville Fire Department and chief for the last eight years before retiring at the end of 2007, the same year he was named the fire chief of the year by the Indiana Fire Chiefs Association (IFCA). He also was a board member of the IFCA for more than six years.

He has a bachelor's degree from Indiana University, a fire science technology certificate from IU and is an internationally accredited hazardous materials technician. At New Mexico Technology University he received training in incident response terrorist bombing technical operations.

In 2007 he co-authored a bill with Indiana Sen. Bob Jackman to provide stricter penalties to landlords who do not have a working smoke detector on their property. The bill was not made into law last year but has been resurrected for 2008.

Under his leadership in 2005, the Connersville fire department received \$712,500, the largest grant in the U.S. The funds were for fire vehicle acquisition.

He and his wife, Faye, have relocated to Greenfield. They have two grown daughters and four grandchildren.

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In 2005, the State of Indiana consolidated all of its emergency management and homeland security efforts into one department by creating the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS). The divisions of IDHS are Emergency Response, Fire and Building Safety; the Indiana Intelligence Fusion Center; Planning and Assessment; Preparedness and Training; and Support Services. These divisions intertwine to accomplish the central mission of IDHS: safeguarding the lives and property of the citizens of Indiana.

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