



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION DEPARTMENT REPORT

TO: Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA - City Manager

FROM: Blake Hayward – Fire Chief

DATE OF MEETING: May 4th, 2026

ITEM TITLE: Department Report –Fire Department

Independence Fire Department sent four members to the FDIC Convention in Indianapolis, IN, in late April to meet with several vendors in the fire service. This event brings in more than 35,000 firefighters from across the world and is the largest fire service event in the nation. While at FDIC, crews met with multiple truck manufacturers, equipment vendors, and representatives from across the industry.

This trip focused on several main topics, including Rescue and Ladder replacement, station design and outfitting ideas, SCBA replacement, and gear and equipment upgrades. Over the two days, members spent more than seven hours each day meeting with vendors, attending gear and equipment demonstrations, and getting a firsthand look (and sometimes feel) at new items entering the fire service. As the industry continues to evolve, we are seeing more technology integrated into equipment and operations, which was fully on display during our time in Indiana.

Last week, crews attended the Annual Career on Wheels event hosted at the JSH campus. While pulling into our parking spot, we received a call for a car accident and had to make a quick exit. Fortunately, everyone involved was okay, and families attending the PR event enjoyed the impromptu "show." We were able to quickly return following the call and spent the remainder of the time interacting with families who came out. This event is a great opportunity for us to meet with the public and showcase the tools and equipment we use each week. Both kids and adults enjoyed the event, and we had a strong turnout despite the cooler weather and wind that moved in.

IFD continues planning and preparation efforts for RAGBRAI in July. We have plans in place to ensure adequate coverage throughout town, similar to our operational approach during large flood events. We intend to have two full crews on duty that day to respond to calls and provide needed assistance to the many visitors coming to our community. Some details are still being finalized, but we are working closely with IPD, AMR, BCSO, RAGBRAI officials, and EMA.

We recently completed our Auto Extrication training with assistance from West Edge Auto Salvage. Jerry generously donated two vehicles for the department to use during the training. Crews split into two groups and practiced hands-on skills, including door pops, roof removals, and dash rolls. This is typically very enjoyable training for our members, as it provides valuable hands-on experience in a safe environment where time pressures and hazards are minimized.