

Illinois Fire Chiefs Association

Fire Chief of the Year Award

Sample Application

The following pages are provided to help prospective nominators through the application process. The information has all been made up and does not represent any actual Fire Chief. The intent is to provide guidance only. The committee understands that each applicant and application is different.

With the completed application page, you must also submit a letter from the nominator, a profile of the Department or District, and a resume, curricula vitae or biography describing the nominee. Letters supporting the nomination are strongly recommended.

The information should give the committee a very clear picture of the nominee and why that nominee should receive this award. The committee needs to know what the applicant has done that sets the applicant apart from all of the other great Fire Chiefs in the State of Illinois.

Some areas the committee looks at include Public Education and Life Safety Advancements; Innovative and Entrepreneurial Efforts and Accomplishments; Education and Credential Portfolio; and Public and Private Sector Contributions at the Local, State and National Levels. A successful applicant will be involved within the fire service and in the community.

The committee is looking for a Chief who has a history of accomplishments, literally the “best of the best”.

We hope the attached is helpful with your application. Thank you for participating in our program.

ILLINOIS FIRE CHIEF OF THE YEAR NOMINATION FORM DEADLINE AUGUST 9, 2019

Nominee Information

Chief Rank or Title	Joe First Name	A. Middle Initial	Best Last Name	Sr. Suffix
Dependable Fire District Fire Department/District Name	123 Main Street Address		Dependable City	11123 Zip Code
123-123-4567 Fire Department/District Phone	Tom Edwards Immediate Supervisor Name		Board President Immediate Supervisor Title	
tedwards@dfpd.co Immediate Supervisor Email		123-123-5678 Immediate Supervisor Work Phone	123-123-7891 Immediate Supervisor Cellular Phone	

Nominator Information

Chief Rank or Title	Sam First Name	I Middle Initial	Am Last Name	 Suffix
MABAS Division 579 Affiliation	1234 Other Street Address		Nowhere City	12236 Zip Code
samiam@nowhere.co Email Address		123-123-1234 Work Phone	123-123-1345 Cellular Phone	

Please check one of the following recognition categories that will apply to the Nominee:

Category	Type	Description			
<input type="checkbox"/>	A	Full Time	Paid Department/District with: All career firefighters.	AND	With a community population in excess of 25,000.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	B	Full Time	Paid Department/District with: All career firefighters.	AND	With a community population at or under 25,000.
<input type="checkbox"/>	C	Part Time	Paid or Combination department/district with: Career, Paid Paid-On-Call, Paid-On-Premise, volunteers, or any combination of these	AND	Any size community
<input type="checkbox"/>	D	Volunteer	Only volunteer members with no or nominal compensation	AND	Any size community

A successful application will follow and/or contain the items below:

- A completed application (this page) for the nominee **[required]**
- A letter from the nominator describing the reason for the nomination **[required]**
- A profile of the Department or District **[required]**
- A resume, curricula vitae or biography of the nominee **[required]**
- Letters of support from those with knowledge of the nominee (no more than five accepted)
- All documentation must be in electronic format (pdf preferred)
- Submit all items together via email to: FCOY@illinoisfirechiefs.org
- All submission **MUST** be emailed by August 9, 2019
- If you do not receive a confirmation of the receipt of your application within five days, email Committee Chairman John Buckley at jbuckley@plvw.org.

To assist nominators in completing successful applications, a sample application is available at www.illinoisfirechief.com/FCOY. For additional information, contact John Buckley at jbuckley@plvw.org.

The Fire Chief of the Year Committee will meet to review the applications and all applicants and submitters will be contacted in early September. 2019 Chief of the Year is awarded at the IFCA conference on October 15th.



IFCA Chief of the Year Committee

July 4, 1976

Members of the Committee:

It is my honor and privilege to write to you with my submission of Chief Joe Best of the Dependable Fire District for the 1976 Illinois Fire Chiefs Association Chief of the Year Award. I feel that Chief Best is very deserving of this award and hope that I will adequately provide your Committee with the information necessary to see Chief Best in the same light.

Chief Best is the number one ambassador for the Dependable Fire District. He is more involved in the community than could be imagined. He is a member (and current president) of the Rotary, Charter Member of the Kiwanis Club, Lions club Tail Tamer, and longtime Treasurer of the Exchange Club. Joe is very involved in his church, serving as a Deacon, Bible Study Leader and Chair of the Senior Citizen Dinner Committee. An avid ice skater, Chief Best co-founded the Big Chill Crew, providing and maintaining an outdoor ice rink. Chief Joe is involved in many other community activities, including the three 5k races and Independence Day Parade. He is the primary push behind the Women and Children Fund, the Humane Society and the Historical Preservation Commission.

All of this community involvement has had an unbelievable impact on the Fire District. He always stresses to the District members that every touch of the community, every child we talk with, and every senior citizen we meet is an opportunity to educate and make their life better. Chief Best believes that when we make someone's life better, we are making our own lives better by twofold. He never lets the District miss out on an opportunity to educate and to market our District in the community. Neighbors are always welcome into the fire station. The fire station is more of a community meeting place than a garage for vehicles. The love that the community shows towards Chief Best and all the members of the District is truly overwhelming.

In 1970, Chief Best was ahead of his time in recognizing the need for the District to inform the residents through an annual report. With the support of all the members and many residents, he spearheaded an effort that produced a ten page report that was able to be mimeographed and shared with nearly 100 residents. This report was able to tell the story of the District over the course of 1969. Since that time, he has worked with his team to provide a report annually, continuing to document the history of the

District. Each year the community eagerly anticipates the report's publication. This year will be the third year of the District awards recognition program. This program awards not only the bravery of the members, but the kind and thoughtful efforts as well. The Chief went beyond the call in recognizing residents for their bravery and kindness.

While the Chief is a true believer in educating the public as a means to keep the community safe, he is also a realist. In 1972, Chief Best introduced the first sprinkler ordinance in the County of Good. While there was some skepticism, the Chief's point was proven when the tavern on Main Street was saved by a sprinkler system when a fire broke out in the storage room last year. Everyone admits that if the sprinkler system had not been installed, the most significant gathering place and the town's primary revenue source would have been lost. This year, the Chief is working to develop a residential sprinkler program. While there is again some skepticism, the Chief has been proven right regularly and nobody is betting against him. With the fire at the tavern, the Chief recognized the need for a Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program. Something not heard of before, the concept behind the program is to intervene before a child becomes a habitual firestarter. While the program is just in its infancy, Chief Best is certain to succeed.

The Chief is also committed to training and education. A student of the "America Burning" report over the past three years, he endorses the idea that the State should develop a training program for firefighters. But he does not stop at endorsing training program, he tirelessly advocates in Springfield to make it happen. His name carries a great deal of weight in the State Capital since he introduced and spearheaded the effort to develop a plan to provide ambulances for those ill and injured, also known as EMS. His pioneering efforts in EMS have already saved hundreds of lives. When not organizing legislation, he is organizing Fire Chiefs throughout the State and this year will host the first ever fire service legislative day to lobby our representatives in Springfield.

Making a difference drives the Chief to be very involved with the national legislative agenda. He has traveled to Washington, DC for the last four years, working to move the fire service into the future. His goal of having dedicated VHF radio frequencies for the fire service is nearly reality. He has raised funds through the annual bake sale to purchase a walkie-talkie that he feels will revolutionize the fire service. He has also introduced the idea that there should be one phone number to call during an emergency, to summon police, fire or an ambulance. While this is more of a dream, Chief Best believes that all emergency calls could go to one location in Good County, and the need to have the phone answered at someone's home would be gone. He hopes to convince our representatives in Washington to be forward thinkers.

The safety of the Dependable Firefighters is Chief Best's primary concern. He believes that this is accomplished through training and has developed an annual training program for all members. One component of this program is physical fitness. He feels that a firefighter's health is one of the few things he can control at a fire. He refuses to allow his firefighters into smoke filled buildings and recently purchase an air rebreather to prevent his firefighters from breathing in this hazardous substance. He believes that smoke is very harmful and a threat to the lives of firefighters.

Chief Best developed the idea that all the firefighters in the area should work together and help each other out. He came up with the idea of a system where fire departments provide help to each other without cost. The system he came up with relies on a phone tree that will call firefighters from neighboring communities to help the stricken department. He hopes that one day this system will grow throughout the County and the State. Knowing Chief Best, I would not be surprised to see it grow throughout the Nation. As the first president of this Mutual Aid System, he refused to stay on for longer

than two years and proudly handed over the gavel to me earlier this year. He continues to mentor me and help me develop my vision.

I could continue to go on about Chief Joe Best, but I hope by now you have a good idea of what the Chief has done and what he continues to work on to improve the lives of his District members, the residents and visitors of his community and the fire service throughout the State and the Nation. I have only touched on the surface of everything that Joe Best has done. I hope that I did him justice.

Chief Best worked tirelessly throughout the last year to improve the lives of his firefighters, his community, his State and his Nation. He is truly a great humanitarian and a Great American. It is once again my pronounced privilege to recommend and encourage your Committee to recognize Chief Joe Best as the Illinois Fire Chief of the year. I know you will agree that he is more than deserving.

I am happy to provide additional information is your Committee desires.

Thank you for considering Chief Joe Best of the Dependable Fire District for the Chief of the Year recognition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam I. Am". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chief Sam I. Am
President, MABAS Division 579



The Dependable Fire District is located in Dependable, Illinois and provides fire protection and paramedic ambulance service to the residents of the Towns of Dependable, Reliable and Trustworthy, as well as some unincorporated areas of Good County. Out of two fire stations, the District protects over 22,000 residents in an area covering thirty-nine square miles. Founded as a volunteer fire company in 1872, the company grew to hire its first full time employee, Fire Chief Joe Best, in 1965. Since that time, the Dependable Fire District has grown to a force of thirty-six career firefighters.

Community involvement drives the organization. We are dedicated to protecting our community through Prevention, Preparation and Protection. We strive to make the community safe for everyone, both resident and visitor alike. To provide for the protection and safety of our citizens by preparing and promoting fire prevention and education and preserving life, property, and the environment through fire suppression, emergency medical service, and hazardous materials mitigation, while recognizing that our people are the key to our success.

In 1975, we responded to nearly 2700 incidents. Of these incidents, we responded to 24 structure fires (including barns) and transported nearly 1000 sick or injured patients to the Good County Community Hospital. This is a slight increase over the calls we responded to in 1977 (2653 calls), however the number of structure fire dropped from over fifty.

Also in 1976, we opened a new fire station to replace the former headquarters. This five bay station is completely modern and has space to expand in the future. Plans are underway to develop a training building so firefighters can prepare for the extreme challenges they face.

In late 1975, the Dependable Fire District was re-rated by the Insurance Services Organization (ISO) as a Class 3 Fire Department. This is a great accomplishment by the Fire District. It demonstrates the District's commitment to the community it serves. The Fire Chief is not satisfied and vows to have a number one rating before he retires, a very lofty goal!

SERVICES

- Fire Prevention
- Fire Suppression
- Fire Inspections & Investigations
- Public Education
- Paramedic Life Support - Transport
- Hazardous Materials Response
- Technical Rescue
- Extrication
- Training Courses
- Lifesaving Courses

OPERATIONS PROFILE

- 2 - Fire Stations
- 3 - Engine Companies
- 1 - Truck Company
- 1 - Brush/Wild land unit
- 2 – Paramedic Transport units
- 1 - Rescue unit (Good County Rescue)
- 1 - Assistant Chief of Operations unit
- 4 - Staff vehicles for administration personnel

PERSONNEL PROFILE

- 36 - Full-Time Uniformed Personnel
- 3 – Administrative Staff
- 100 - Volunteer Support Members

COVERAGE AREAS

- 28.96 Square miles of city limits
- 10 Square miles of unincorporated area
- 12,650 Population within the city limits
- 9,400 Active enrollment at Dependable State University
- Geographical Area: Mixture of urban, suburban, rural, industrial and educational

ISO RATING

Class 3

- We are a Class 3 for all homes within 5 road miles of a Fire Station and within a 1,000 feet of a fire hydrant.
- We are a Class 3X for homes within 5 road miles of a Fire Station but outside of 1,000 feet from a fire hydrant.



Joseph A. Best
234 Main Street
Dependable, IL 11123
123-123-9874

Fire Chief with over 29 years of experience in organizing all aspects of preventing fires and strategies to combat structural fire loss and increase community involvement and awareness of fire safety. Possess and have demonstrated many skills necessary to promote positive community relations.

PERSONAL

Born and raised in Dependable, IL. Married for twenty-two years to Mary Joan Best. Father of nine children, youngest child currently in college. Grandfather to six.

COMMUNITY

President, Dependable Rotary Club
Charter Member, Dependable Kiwanis Club
Current Tail Tamer, Lions Club of Dependable
Treasurer, Dependable Exchange Club
Founder, Big Chill Crew
Deacon and Elder, Dependable Church

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Serving as the Chief of the Dependable Fire Company in Dependable, Illinois since 1965, becoming the full time Fire Chief in 1965. Prior to being elected Chief, served the Dependable Volunteer Fire Company for sixteen years.

While serving as a volunteer firefighter, worked as a mechanic at Floyd's Shop in Motorville, IL. After ten years as a senior mechanic, promoted to the shop manager responsible for all three mechanics and repair estimates.

Served as a Sargent in the United States Army for four years. Gained experience as a large vehicle mechanic. Honorably discharged.

EDUCATION

Graduate of Dependable High school with high honors

Associates Degree in Applied Science from Sinclair Community College, specializing in vehicle mechanics

CERTIFICATIONS AND LICENSES

Certified as an Emergency Medical Driver by the State of Illinois



IFCA Chief of the Year Committee

July 4, 1976

Members of the Committee:

I was recently informed by Chief Sam I. Am that he intended to nominate Chief Joe Best, the wonderful leader of our District, for the IFCA Fire Chief of the Year award. I am delighted and honored to write to you today in support of this nomination. Chief Best is, quite simply, the best. Joe was raised in our town and I have known him since he was a young child. Even as a small boy, I knew he would be the best.

Joe started his fire service career as a young volunteer after being honorably discharged from the Army. Immediately, he became one of the top responders with the District. His desire to learn was second to none; soon he was training members who had fought fires for years. His ability to learn and then teach skills is incredible. To this day, Chief Best remains the top instructor in our District, if not Good County.

When time came for the Dependable Fire District to become more dependable, I had no doubt that our first full time employee would be Joe Best. While Joe tried to convince us that he could do the job as a volunteer, to save the District money, he conceded that the District would need help as the town grew. Since that moment, Chief Best has embraced the challenge of transitioning our organization from a fully volunteer District to a career staffed District. This transition has not been without bumps in the road, and even a few potholes. Chief Best did not waiver for a moment, guiding the District every step of the way.

Even with a large family, Joe has always found time for the community. I have no idea how he finds the time for all he does. His involvement in the community has paid off in droves for the Fire District. Everyone in town knows Chief Joe. The goodwill experienced by all the members of the Fire District is a direct result of the efforts of one man – Chief Joe Best.

I wholeheartedly place my support behind Chief Joe Best for the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association Chief of the Year Award for 1976. I cannot believe that you will find a better suited Fire Chief or a better man.

Thank you for considering my letter of support for Chief Best.

Sincerely,

Tommy DeBoss
President, Board of Trustees
Dependable Fire District



IFCA Chief of the Year Committee

July 4, 1976

Members of the Committee:

My name is Genie Simmons and I am the third grade teacher at Washington Elementary School in Dependable. I heard that Chief Joe Best is being nominated for the Fire Chief of the Year award. Chief Best is clearly the best Fire Chief. For years, Chief Joe has led his firefighters in educating the students throughout our town.

I could go on for hours about the impact Chief Joe has made on the lives of our children (and taught the teachers a thing or two as well) but I thought I would let them explain.

Joey G. – Last year, I learned how to call 9-1-1 if there is an emergency. He helped me practice until I did it without help. It took a long time but Chief Joe kept smiling and helping me. I have never called 9-1-1 but I know how to if I need to. He also told me not to call unless I needed help from a fireman or policeman.

Crissy H. – Chief Joe taught us what to do if our clothes are on fire. I thought we should run but he told us NO! DON'T RUN. He said we should stop, drop to the ground and roll around to put the fire out. He even showed us how to do it and then let us try. I will never forget what to do if my clothes catch on fire.

Jesse J. – Do you know how get out of your house if it is on fire? I do! Chief Joe showed us how to make a plan to get out of the house if it is on fire. He gave me a blank drawing of my house. I took it home and my mom helped me make a plan. I even found a meeting place, just like Chief Joe told me.

Cindy L. – When there is smoke in your house, you need to crawl low. You do this because the air on the ground is better than the smoke. Chief Joe even showed me how. I showed my dad when I went home.

Artie G. – Chief Joe told me about smoke detectors. He had one and it was really loud. Now I know what to do if I hear it. I also told my mom and dad that we need to test our smoke detectors every month. Just like Chief Joe said.

Sammy M. – I like Chief Joe. He comes to the school with the other firemen every year and teach us stuff. I learn a lot from Chief Joe and the other fireman. I can't wait for Chief Joe to come back to school. I won't stay home that day.

Billy R. – Chief Joe and the other firemen are brave. They told us all about how brave they are. When I grow up, I want to be a Fire Chief just like Chief Joe.

As you can see, the children love Chief Joe. More importantly, they learn from him and remember what he teaches them. Chief Joe never hesitates to get on the ground and show the children what they need to do. His examples make the lesson memorable and will save lives.

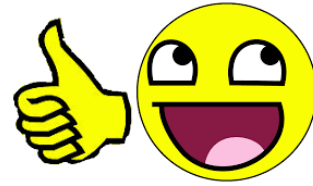
Every year, the kids want to know when Chief Joe is coming to school. I hope he continues to do everything he does for our school.

I am confident that you now understand what Chief Joe means to us and seriously consider his application for Chief of the Year. I know that he deserves the honor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Genie Simmons". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "G" and "S".

Genie Simmons
3rd Grade Teacher
Washington School



IFCA Chief of the Year Committee

July 4, 1976

Members of the Committee:

I understand that Chief Joe Best has been nominated for the Illinois Fire Chief of the Year award. I cannot think of a better nominee.

Chief Best has been a stalwart advocate for the fire service in Good County for years. I have known Chief Best for over twenty years and, even as a young volunteer, Joe has never let down his guard while advocating for the fire service.

For many of these years, Chief Best has worked to open a County fire training academy. Two years ago, this dream came true here in Good County. We now have a state of the art training facility with a building to practice with and even a fire engine to use. His efforts have led to a better trained firefighting force in the County and is sure to save the lives of our firefighters. He has now turned his attention to Springfield and the development of State firefighter training standards. I know he will not give up until he is successful.

This past year, Chief Best has worked to improve communications within the County. He has found a vhf radio frequency and started buying walkie-talkies for the firefighters. His efforts have led to a better and more dependable fire department by allowing them to communicate with each other. He has also found another radio frequency to be used throughout Good County by all firefighters and has even found one for the police to use.

Chief Good is a frequent visitor to the County Seat and a knowledgeable and trusted advisor to the members of the County Board. Chief Best was recently appointed as Chair of the newly formed Emergency Communications Board for Good County.

I strongly encourage the committee to consider the fine application on behalf of the best Fire Chief, Chief Joe Best.

Sincerely,

Herbert L. Herbert

Chairman, Good County Board



IFCA Chief of the Year Committee

July 4, 1976

Members of the Committee:

I understand that Chief Joe Best has been nominated for the Illinois Fire Chief of the Year award. I would like to encourage the committee to grant Chief Best this great honor.

Joe has been a mentor and a friend. At the chief of the Better Regional Fire District, Joe has not only supported me and my firefighters, he has been there in the times of trouble.

When I became Chief, our organization was in chaos. The former Chief was in jail after he pilfered our accounts, the President of our Board had resigned in disgrace and we were having trouble recruiting any volunteers. Chief Joe drove over two hours to our Station over one hundred times last year. He was in our community recruiting members. He helped redesign our budget and financial systems. He organized our fire ever "Cheer for Beer" event and later, our inaugural "Dance with a Firefighter" event. These events meant so much to the community. They restored the faith that had been lost. They raised funds to allow us to purchase needed firefighting supplies.

Chief Joe treated our community like it was his own. He did this on his own time, without getting paid a dime. He would not even accept the free meals from the Fire Bell Saloon. He was so loved in the community that he received twenty-two write in votes for Mayor, giving our current Mayor a run for his money.

Please consider Chief Joe Best for the Fire Chief of the Year Award. He is truly a hero among heroes.

Thank you;

Chief Red Suspenders
Better Fire District