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BOARD SPOTLIGHT

By Steve Hanson, ISPA Director, Fort Dodge Police Department



Hello Iowa State Police Association (ISPA) members, and greetings from Fort Dodge. I hope everyone is enjoying the spring weather as we get closer to summer, which for most means golf, baseball, camping, soccer, fishing, and the list can go on and on.

I would like to take a moment and reflect over the past year-and-a-half as a member of the ISPA Board of Directors. When I was elected to the board in 2014, at the Ames conference, I was a little overwhelmed and wondered what I had gotten myself into. Now a year-and-a-half later, I am so glad I took on the challenge of being a board member and look forward to the years to come.

The first year during the legislative session, I made myself dizzy trying to keep up with all the different information coming at me from our lobbyists (who do a wonderful job, by the way) from the Capital, as they reported weekly on bills of interest to ISPA. All the board members would review the bills and weigh in with our thoughts. Most of the time, we all shared the same opinions about the bills (weird, a bunch of cops think alike), but sometimes our opinions would vary. At meetings we would discuss the bills and give the pros and cons of each. An interesting part of the board is the demographics of the board itself. Some board members work in big departments, some on our states borders — and the best part is the vast number of years of experience in law enforcement.

During the first legislative session, I had a phone call with the ISPA president at the time, Ryan Goecke. I started to apologize that I wasn't keeping up with our legislative picks, but President Goecke laughed and told me it just takes time. Here in my second year, things are easier and more interesting because I have a better understanding of what I'm reading. Also in this second year, I've taken the time to get to know one of my local legislators, and after a couple conversations, I've realized what a small world it really is.

A highlight of the second legislative session was passing SF378, the Peace Officer Indemnification bill. The ISPA Board of Directors, along with our lobbyists Paula and Mike, and the grass-roots efforts by our members, were the reason we were able to get this bill passed and signed by Governor Branstad. On February 29, 2016, board members attended a House Judiciary Committee where this bill was discussed by legislators and it passed unanimously. The bill was passed again by the senate and sent to the governor to be signed into law. What

makes this bill so rewarding is that not only is it good legislation — it's one of the resolutions from the annual ISPA Conference.

In closing, I would extend an offer to any ISPA member who has ever thought of serving on the ISPA Board of Directors and challenge them to take a serious look. The things I have learned and the people I have met in only a year-and-a-half leaves me very excited for the years to come. As a reminder, the 84th Annual ISPA Conference will be held October 3–5, 2016, in Sioux City, at the Stoney Creek Hotel and Conference Center. I hope to see you there.

Stay safe and God bless.