



January 1, 2017

Dear fire-rescue service stakeholders,

It is with great pleasure and pride that I present the **Wingspread VI Conference Report**. Before delving into this new report, it is important to understand how we got to this point.

Wingspread Conferences are convened by the Johnson Foundation on a 10-year cycle. With the first fire service Wingspread Conference being held in 1966, this was our 50th anniversary of this important process. The Johnson Foundation's mission statement is "to be a catalyst for positive and lasting change leading to healthier environments and communities." The iconic Wingspread reception center designed by Frank Lloyd Wright is the crown jewel of this amazing campus.

The purpose of our gathering was to discuss the issues that are impacting the fire rescue service currently and into the foreseeable future. Forty-three fire and rescue leaders were invited to this intense three-day meeting in Racine, Wisconsin. This is the largest number of conference participants ever invited, reflecting an earnest attempt to have all aspects of our industry represented during the discussion, debates and deliberation.

The end result of this meeting is the 14 strategic Statements of National Significance that make up the body of this report. In compiling this report, the conference committee was asked to focus on the strategic level of delivery of fire and rescue services to American communities. By design, the committee did not discuss the tactical or task-level operations, knowing that there are many agencies and reports addressing the same. Each strategic statement was framed to address how do we reduce the loss of life, injuries and property, with a focus on keeping the responding firefighters safe.

These 14 statements consist of three distinct parts. The problem or issues statement serves as the headline relating to the topic being discussed. The next section is marked background. This section provides a brief but important orientation of the issue, helping the reader to understand the context of how and why the statement was added to the final report. The last element listed under each statement is the action steps necessary to solve each issue. These action items are a new addition to the Wingspread report to help the those in the fire rescue service develop and implement a sound and effective path forward to resolve the associated issue at their local level.

Some may view the action steps as over-reaching and outside the scope of the committee's charge to forecast our future. At the same time, others will be disappointed that the report did not go far enough to focus on a detailed prescriptive solution for each significant statement. There was much discussion about this among the Wingspread participants to reach a consensus, whereby the term "should" was selected over the term "must."

To blend 43 strong, intelligent and opinionated personalities into a single voice was an arduous effort to say the least, but one the team strove to achieve. Building this consensus document meant sacrificing individual views — some disagree on what was added and some disagree on what was omitted — to reflect the over-arching view of this diverse group. That's to be expected in a process like this. The rich and valuable dialogue made up the basis for an outstanding report of significant issues that this directed towards continuous improvement.

The Wingspread VI committee trusts that each reader will find this report useful to help every department and allied agencies to improve their operation and be able to better serve their communities. A website (<http://www.wingspreadvi.org>) has been established to allow everyone free and easy access to this report. The committee requested that as many as possible fire rescue service associations receive a printed copy of the report, which is underway. More copies are available from the National Fire Heritage Center at no charge. Please contact the NFHC (<http://www.thenfhc.org>) to receive a copy until the supply is exhausted.

Thank you for taking time to review this letter and to consider blending the results of this report into making us a better service. To learn more about Wingspread, there will be a broad national discussion on these topics over the coming years at major fire rescue service events. Please plan on attending one. Most of these events will be posted on the Wingspread website.

In the interest of a fire safe and secure America, I am,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alan V. Brunacini', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Alan V. Brunacini, Chair  
Fire Rescue Wingspread Conference