

Greetings from myself, Officer Melissa Henderson from Cedar Rapids Police Department, your ISPA council representative. Thanks for the opportunity to continue to serve on the ILEA council.

It has been a busy year at ILEA council meetings. For those of you who may not know, we meet every other month at the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy at 0900. Everyone is welcome in person or online for the open session, only ILEA staff and council are present during the closed session. This past year we have also had a few special sessions/hearings due to a few cases that have come up outside of our regular meetings. Every month the agenda and previous month's minutes are posted on the ILEA website under the Academy Council tab, <https://ilea.iowa.gov/about/academy-council>. Director Brady Carney and ILEA staff continue to do a good job with communication by posting a monthly newsletter. The newsletter is sent to all law enforcement agencies in the State of Iowa.

Our council has seen some new faces this past year. They include Dan Jansen from the West Des Moines Police Department representing a police department with population over 50,000, Ryan Ridout with the Iowa Department of Transportation representing IDOT. ILEA has added a few new staff members as well. One big change has been Assistant Attorney General, who was our ILEA Council legal representative has now been hired full time by ILEA as their legal counsel. She has done an amazing job already and will be a great asset to ILEA, and our council in her new position. We will be getting a new Assistant Attorney General soon for council. ILEA has continued to make great improvements and hire qualified and well-respected instructors and staff.

Council continues to have large amounts of waivers for various reasons. We are seeing lots of waivers for new instructor rolls that don't fulfill the requirement to be a peace officer for at least three years. We have been granting most if not all these waivers as we see hardships as agencies are losing instructors due to retirements and other various reasons. Many small departments have high turnovers and are having retention issues. When we grant these waivers, we typically ask they are mentored by another instructor until they reach their three-year mark. Other waivers we continue to see are for moral turpitude concerns. These are handled on a case-by-case basis. The council puts a lot of thought into these waivers, and we make sure we are following law when we do grant waivers. One major factor for us is recency and severity in acts of moral turpitude. We are fair and consistent, but every case is different.

We continue to see several cases to be reviewed for possible de-certification. One thing to remember is an Iowa Peace officer is either certified or de-certified. There is no such thing as an officer not in "good standing". We review each one of these cases and look at severity and many other factors. We sometimes offer suspensions, remedial training, counseling, or stipulations if/when officers do return to duty. It is important every agency is doing a diligent background investigation. If they have questions or need guidance, please contact staff at ILEA.

ILEA has had some great recruit numbers this past year in their academies. Other academies that have hosted are DPS, Des Moines, Cedar Rapids and Hawkeye Community College. It has come to our attention Hawkeye CC will not be hosting a Level II academy in the spring of 2025. ILEA is assessing the situation and plans to find placement for the recruits slated to attend Hawkeye in the spring of 2025.

ILEA and council continue the discussion of hiring standards and looking at options for written and physical standards. They are dedicating time and research into this important topic. We all feel the standards should be updated; however, we are trying to decide what that looks like. I am part of the curriculum committee, and we plan to meet soon to evaluate and possibly make some changes, if necessary, with regards to training curriculum.

I continue to enjoy representing ISPA on council and am always open to your input, suggestions, or topics you would like me to bring forward to address.

You can contact me at.

Melissa Henderson

m.henderson@cedar-rapids.org, 319-286-5483