



# **L&C Fire Science Instructor Shawn Bloemker Recognized by Illinois Fire Science Institute**

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GODFREY – The Illinois Fire Science Institute (IFSI) recently recognized Lewis and Clark Community College Corporate and Community Learning Fire Science Instructor Shawn Bloemker for developing a Fire Behavior and Smoke class.



“Shawn is a fantastic instructor and is currently assisting Bernie Sebold with the coordination of our own Fire Science program,” said L&C Dean of Liberal Arts and Business Jill Lane. “He is an expert in his field and this statewide recognition speaks to the overall quality of our Fire Science program.”

IFSI recognizes instructors each month who exemplify quality instruction, student engagement, professional demeanor and knowledge base. Bloemker has been an instructor with the Institute since 2004, and has not only written curriculum used

statewide, but was also responsible for developing a fire behavior box that has been used in instruction and in research.

“The recognition from the Illinois Fire Service Institute is truly an honor,” Bloemker said. “The instructors that work for IFSI are the best instructors in the world. When IFSI told me I was selected for the recognition, I was amazed.”

In 2008, Bloemker was approached by the IFSI to develop a fire behavior and smoke class for their cornerstone program. While developing the class, Bloemker strived to create an exciting course with which students could interact.

“I knew from years of taking classes, firefighters are sick and tired of instructors who come in and read every word from a PowerPoint slide show to the class,” Bloemker said. “The challenge was to create a class that would teach firefighters fire behavior terminology and smoke, both indicators that allow firefighters to recognize rapid fire events, without creating a death-by-PowerPoint approach.”

Bloemker starts the class by lighting candles to show how the candle goes from a solid to a liquid and then to a gas. While the candle is burning, he reviews a few of the key fire behavior definitions with students. After blowing the candle out, he ignites the smoke coming off the candle, which causes the wick to reignite, illustrating the definitions of ignition temperature and fire point.

“The candle demonstration creates a nice opportunity to talk about how the smoke firefighters are crawling under is really a detached gas phase looking for an ignition source,” Bloemker said.

This technique is just one example of how Bloemker uses real-life scenarios to teach fire science. He also utilizes a one-of-a-kind training tool he invented, the Max Fire Box, to showcase the various stages and definitions of fire and smoke behavior in a controlled environment.

“My proudest moment of my career so far is designing the patent-pending Max Fire Box,” Bloemker said. “This remarkable one-of-a-kind live fire training prop allows current and future firefighters the opportunity to witness rapid-fire and smoke behavior events in a controlled environment. Instructors are able to define over 40 key fire service definitions while using the Max Fire Box.”

A majority of fire departments and colleges with fire science programs are unable to provide live fire training. The cost of burn towers, metal shipping containers used for live fire training are often not affordable to the majority of fire departments and colleges with fire science programs. The Max Fire Box is a safe, cost effective way to offer live

fire training in a controlled environment. To see a video demonstration of the box, visit [www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNgvLAZOIFI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNgvLAZOIFI).

Bloemker earned his Associate in Applied Fire Science degree from L&C and his Bachelor of Science in Fire Service Management from Southern Illinois University Carbondale. He was honored as Godfrey Firefighter of the Year.

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