

## OK - I will NOT say "I told you so".

In early 2017, the Lobbyist Firm for the IPA alerted us to pending new Firework Legislation. As these things go, they are generally not anything to get excited about because once Legislation is brought up, usually there are 2 to 4 years before anything comes of it. So, when they introduced (at this point its just a thought) the idea of changing things, most of us were not too concerned. Boy! Were we wrong.

In June 2017, the new Laws hit the books - effective JULY 1. As you can imagine, this kind of speed and State Law don't generally play well together. The new Laws were no exception. Myself, our Treasurer, our President, our Legislative Committee, and about 3/4 of our Membership had deep concerns about just what was to be proposed and how it would all work. Those concerns were not without merit.

It has been a year since those rules went into effect. I purposely did not write about this until I could see the results. To say it has been a mix is an understatement. From a practical standpoint, the cops have been swamped with calls to the point that they (some departments) are simply ignoring nuisance from Fireworks complaints. This usually has the opposite effect and increases calls when the complainant gets no satisfaction - they call back to find out where they are.

I must say that I myself, even being a lover of all things that go "boom", found myself wishing either the cops would come get him to stop, or that the neighbor across the street from me might have some hidden birth defect which would cause him to drop dead suddenly. Neither happened. Night after night beginning around 9pm, I would be treated to a display which lasted until well past 10pm. The guy obviously makes way too much money. I couldn't afford that on a bet. One of the major points Lawmakers had brought up - countless times - in defense of this new bill was that people would ONLY shoot these things off in designated areas, and NOT at home.... Yeah right.

This was only one of the flaws we pointed out to Lawmakers in Des Moines, and why the General Membership of the IPA voted NOT to endorse this Legislation. We kept getting patently obviously false assurances throughout the Legislative process. Now many cities are placing restrictions on the sales of, and especially the shooting of, these 'works. Expect a higher number of responses from cops, as these restrictions increase. Maybe that means my neighbor will stop the nightly shows (I can only hope).

So much for the fallacy that "people will only shoot with a permit in approved areas." We also had deep concerns about the verbiage used in both 1.3G and 1.4G pieces. Parts of one, would seemingly contradict the other, and vice-versa. One new Vendor in Cedar Rapids read things one way, and another Vendor in Dubuque would read it another way. This cost time, money, and more than a Fair Share of inconvenience. One Vendor believing his business/building would be grandfathered in, didn't bring his building up to code and his "grand-opening" was set back far enough that they did not meet the allowed time frame to sell when he neglected to realize he needed a sprinkler system to meet Code. He's going to try again, this year.

So, we have Customer's not listening (what's new), Vendors not understanding arguably vague terminology, cops not doing what they should be (mostly out of frustration), and a "loosely" crafted set of rules to go by. What could go wrong?

Add to that, my biggest concern - Safety. I would like to see things handled like C&C for handguns. Make it MANDATORY for all people who want to purchase Fireworks, to go through a 2 or 3 hour Safety class BEFORE they look down the tube to see why the 'rocket' in the tube didn't go, or someone blows off a finger, or loses an eye, or.... You get the idea. These are ALL things that lowans did to themselves in 2017. 2018 won't be much better, I'm afraid.

Also, barely addressed was the matter of alcohol & shooting. FEDERAL Law for 1.3G completely prohibits Fireworks and Alcohol mixing. If you have been drinking - YOU DO NOT SHOOT! Very simple, concise, easy to understand, no defense against it. You have ANY kind of BAC just prior to, during, or immediately after a Shoot in 1.3G, you have got a Huge problem with the BATFE. Iowa Law should be as specific - its not.

People doing what they want, without a permit, wherever they choose to do it. A lessening of Law Enforcement. More potential Accidents/Deaths. Now a big pushback on this legislation, and local Legislation to counter what the State has done. The IPA did speak out against all this before it went through, but I am NOT going to say "I told you so".