

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**  
**70<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION**  
**OF THE**  
**PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY**  
**JUNE 1<sup>ST</sup> THROUGH JUNE 4<sup>TH</sup> 2010**

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY**  
**DOMINICK MARINO**

It is my honor and privilege to welcome you to the 70<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Professional Firefighters Association of New Jersey, IAFF, AFL-CIO-CLC. This year will mark the 81<sup>st</sup> year of the PFANJ's commitment to the interests of paid professional firefighters, emergency medical services, rescue and related service members as well as their families. With our invited guests and speakers that we have in attendance, it is our hope that you will leave here on Friday with an abundance of knowledge to bring back to your membership.

I take this opportunity on behalf of the entire Executive Board and especially myself, to thank our Office Manager – Eleanor Keith. She is an invaluable asset to the members of the PFANJ. I ask you now to join with me to thank her for all her dedication over the years in keeping the office running!

It is my hope that the next few days will be informative but also relaxing. In our life time, we have not seen the calculated effort of some to undermine the Union movement like we are seeing today. Now more than ever before your role as a union leader will be tested and strained! In your role as leaders, there are no nights, no weekends and no holidays. When your members call, they want answers! When your members call, you're there. So you should take these few days to meet your brothers and sisters from around the state. I'm sure you will find that you have many "union" things in common.

I would like to thank Chairperson Charlie Grieco and the Convention Committee for their hard work in preparing this convention. The time and effort needed to ensure that these few days come off without a hitch is a monumental task.



**All this is done while still having to service their own locals and more importantly be there for their families needs.**

**The Union continues to be financially sound. Brother Hilliard has been working tirelessly over the last year with respect to the PFANJ finances, always looking for ways to enhance our financial stability. One such way is the Affinity program through TD Bank. The association with TD Bank has the potential of supplementing part of the Relief Fund, at no cost to the PFANJ. Brother Hilliard's efforts though have put a strain on his personnel life and he has asked that he be allowed to resign from the position of Treasurer. For those of you who know Bob, this was not an easy decision. Reluctantly, I have accepted he wishes. At this time, I'd like to thank Brother Hilliard for all he has done for the members of the PFANJ and wish him well in his future endeavors.**

**Along those lines and with the executive board's approval, I have asked Brother Jeffrey Holtz to fill the unexpired term of the office of Treasurer. Over the years, Brother Holtz has proven to be a valuable asset. His diligence, dedication and determination will serve him well as your state association treasurer. I thank him for accepting this position and would ask that you join with me now in welcoming him to the dais.**

**Brother Holtz in only his first few days in office has brought to the PFANJ a program that could save our members hard earned dollars and also earn the PFANJ Relief Fund donations. We have joined with Viridian to offer discounted rates to all PFANJ members for utilities, gas and electric. You will hear from their representative during the convention and you can stop by his booth in the Vendor area.**

**Because of our financial stability, we are looking to purchase the building and lot next door to our state office. We feel the opportunity to purchase this building will in the long run, give the state association a steady flow of income because of the office space we would be able to lease. This idea is in the infancy stage and we will keep all presidents and delegates' updated as it progresses.**

**Our membership has been fluctuating some since our last convention. Most departments are not able to hire because of budget constraints and financial instability. There has been, as you all know, a higher than usual number of our**



most senior members retiring. This in part is due to the volatile legislation and proposed legislation that our state legislators and governor have put forth and who at every turn are looking to diminish the benefits that our union brothers before us, worked so hard to achieve. Many of our locals have experienced the threats of layoffs and in our EMS ranks, disbanding of departments. Since our last convention the fight was lost in Perth Amboy and 10 union brothers and sisters, the entire membership of IAFF Local 3994 – Perth Amboy EMS, were let go because the city turned over their EMS responsibilities to a hospital. We know we have fights ahead, and how your membership chooses to fight those fights will set the stage. In Irvington, there is a push from the mayor to lay up to 10 firefighters off. In Atlantic City the mayor wants to lay off up to a third of the department. The State Association and the IAFF are able, ready and willing to assist you in these most difficult times.

We have had inquiries to our union with respect to departments affiliating with the PFANJ and IAFF. As long as the unit requesting fits into the criteria of what is needed to become a member, they will be given the opportunity to join.

We continue to keep our website and publication updated so that all our members are informed. Brother Bob King has kept us on schedule with getting our state publication “All Hands” , with four issues every year. I wish to acknowledge and thank Brother Bob King for his commitment and efforts on behalf of our publication and website.

The PFANJ continues to be connected with our sisters and brothers throughout the IAFF, as members of the Federation of State and Provincial Professional Firefighters. The Federation meets twice a year and we have participated in those meetings. When the state presidents get together and go over the issues that they each are wrestling with, you find out real early that you are not alone in your battles. What is happening here in New Jersey is happening throughout the country. It is hoped that when something works in another state, it might work for other states too. So communication and dialog between the states is imperative. Our state association over the last year has strengthened our ties with the Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts State Associations.



**Our Corporate Partners Program continues to grow. On behalf of all the members of the PFANJ, I wish to thank our Corporate Partners for aligning with us to enhance benefits and afford opportunities to all our members. Over the next three days I'd ask you to visit each Corporate Partners displays in the room next door and see what they have to offer you and your members. You will hear from some of our corporate sponsors at some point during the next three days.**

**The PFANJ is still a respected voice throughout the state. Our relationship with the New Jersey State Fraternal Order of Police as well as the New Jersey Career Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs Associations will benefit our members when we have common issues. We have worked closely with the New Jersey Department of Labor, Public Employee Safety and Health Advisory Board, Police and Fireman's Retirement System, Fire Advisory Board and others. We have formed a relationship with many of the other unions throughout the state, CWA, NJEA, ASFSME, IPTEW, AFT through the NJ AFL-CIO.**

**Although recent events have strained the relations with state legislators, we will continue to fight for the rights of firefighters! We are at a pivotal moment in our history with respect to the legislature. The next few weeks and months will give you all a clearer picture as to where the "fight" has to be directed. The rally that was held on May 22<sup>nd</sup> was a clear message to all politicians. It's time to stand up for what you believe in! Let's see where they stand.**

**We have yet to establish a working relation with the Governor's office; we will continue to work to get our foot in the door. We have reached out on several occasions to the governor, but have yet received any answer. We did invite the governor to attend this convention, but there was no response. We will continue to contact the governor's office to set up a meeting to see if there is some common ground that we can establish a working relationship.**

**Our legislative agenda is still very much active, coordinated by 1<sup>st</sup> Executive Vice President George Borek. Brother Borek continues to interact with the New Jersey State AFL-CIO labor representatives and the Senate and Assembly members. Brother Borek will give his report during the convention, but I will mention two very important pieces of legislation: Thomas P. Canzanella Twenty-**



**First Century First Responders Act, (A-1250 and S-1624) and we have a bill which will allow certain members who were put into the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) to transfer into the Police and Fireman's Retirement System (PFRS), (A-1469 and S-1771). There are other bills that we are following that brother Borek will give in his report.**

**Labor issues have been diligently coordinated by 2<sup>nd</sup> Executive Vice President Joseph Maguire. Brother Maguire will give his report during the convention. Brother Maguire continues to represent the PFANJ with the New Jersey State AFL-CIO as our designated representative to their Public Employees Committee (PEC). Brother Maguire has been the point person for any group that seeks to affiliate with the PFANJ and IAFF.**

**As you know, we, along with the NJ FOP, filed a lawsuit against the State of New Jersey when they underfunded our pension system back in 2004. That lawsuit is still ongoing. The Appellate Division has granted our motion for an expedited appeal, which the State and Legislature were against. Our brief is due on June 25, but will be submitted before that date. We continue this fight to protect our pension system.**

**On April 23<sup>rd</sup> along with Teamsters Local 96, we filed a lawsuit against the governor, state treasurer, Senate President, Assembly Speaker and both houses of the legislature because of the laws enacted on March 22<sup>nd</sup> which undermines our ability to collectively bargain and violates our Federal and State Constitutional rights. The delegates will be briefed on this, on Thursday.**

**Our Federal Firefighters have endured the consolidation of the three bases on October 1<sup>st</sup> and pending closing of others. Al Foster and Gene Stabulis have been working with the federal fighters to ensure that the members are afforded every avenue available to them. With direction from Al and Gene, the IAFF and PFANJ are at their disposal and assist wherever possible.**

**On behalf of the entire PFANJ Executive Board, it is our honor to represent the interests of our members and their families. We are members of a Proud and Professional Union that represents professional firefighters, emergency medical personnel, rescue and related support service members. I wish to thank at this time the members of the PFANJ Executive Board and each and every one of you. It's**



because of your hard work, dedication and compassion that our Union is so stable and strong.

Today we are fortunate to have IAFF General Secretary-Treasurer Thomas Miller with us. Brother Miller was asked by General President Schaitberger to fill the unexpired term of Brother Bollon, who retired. Brother Bollon will truly be missed, but we wish him a long and healthy retirement. The PFANJ congratulates Brother Miller and wish him well in his new position.

At this time, I would like to thank our General President, Harold Schaitberger, for taking time out of his busy schedule to join us today. There are a multitude of issues before our International and President Schaitberger has guided our international to meet these issues head on! We have been fortunate to have a General President who is willing to get into the trenches for the betterment of all member of the IAFF. He not only directs the IAFF on political and occupational aspects for all IAFF members, but when a local or state is devastated by some force of nature, the IAFF is there. I want to thank, on behalf of myself and the entire membership of the PFANJ, General President Schaitberger for his dedication and leadership.

Although I have saved the next individual for last to thank, I and the PFANJ owe him a great deal. His support over the years has never wavered. Every time a local requests information or seeks advice, he is there for them. His knowledge and friendship that he has shown to our state association and its members is invaluable. On behalf of the Executive Board, the delegates in attendance today and those not here today and myself, I thank, my friend, IAFF 1<sup>st</sup> District Vice President Kevin Gallagher.

The road ahead of us appears to be bumpy and winding! Our skills as labor leaders will be tested. Our ability to navigate what lies ahead will be challenging. But our strength, fortitude and dedication will carry us through these times. I welcome the challenge that lies ahead and, with your assistance, the PFANJ will prevail. I thank you for the opportunity and your support as we forge ahead. Enjoy the convention.

