

PRESIDENT'S REPORT
69TH ANNUAL CONVENTION
OF THE
PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY
MAY 26TH THROUGH MAY 29TH 2009

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY
DOMINICK MARINO

It is my honor and privilege to welcome you to the 69th Annual Convention of the Professional Firefighters Association of New Jersey, IAFF, AFL-CIO-CLC. This year marks the 80th 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 the many guests and speakers that we have in attendance, it is our hope that you will leave here on Friday with a wealth of knowledge to bring back to your membership. You are the elected leaders of the over 3300 members of the PFANJ, and as elected leaders, you gather the information to bring back to your members.

First and foremost, I must thank on behalf of the entire Executive Board and especially myself, our Office Manager – Eleanor Keith. Her dedication and over 20+ years of keeping the office running are invaluable to the PFANJ.

Since our last convention, we lost Elizabeth Firefighter Gary Stephens. Gary was also Local 777's vice president. Gary was tragically killed in the line of duty while operating at a multi-alarm fire on January 2nd 2009. It is a grim reminder of the dangers of our profession. We also lost a good friend and unionist in Retired Fire Officer Don Silvi. Brother Silvi carried on as a union leader well into his retirement years as he continued to work tirelessly for the betterment of all retired firefighters. These two Unionists will be missed.



The next few days should be informative and also relaxing. Day in and day out, your role as a union leader is tested. In your role as leaders, there are no nights, no weekends and no holidays. When our members call, they want answers! When your members call, you are 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 things in common.

I would like to thank the Convention Committee and Chairperson Charlie Grieco for their hard work in preparing for 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 stability of our Union is very strong. The membership last convention took action on various resolutions that was the epodes of the stability. Because of the resolutions that were passed at our last convention, I can report that the loans have been satisfied. 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.

Our membership has not fluctuated much since our last convention. Most departments are not able to hire because of budget constraints and financial instability. Many of our locals have experienced the threats of layoffs and in our EMS ranks, disbanding of departments. We have had one brother from Old Bridge Local 3311 that was laid off in January. The efforts of the Hackensack locals, IAFF and PFANJ were not successful in



Hackensack. And now there is the same fight in Perth Amboy with ten union members who could be out of a job by June 30th because of the city turning over their EMS responsibilities to a hospital. The Perth Amboy local and the IAFF and PFANJ are working to save these “members’ jobs”. When support is requested from this local, I am confident that the members of this union will respond.

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!

Our constitution and by-laws were updated at our last convention, and a copy has been provided in your convention packet. This was the first time in over 18 years that this had been done.

There have been many inquiries to our union with respect to departments affiliating with the PFANJ and IAFF. Every opportunity is being given and offered to these inquiries.

Our website continues to afford all our members a wealth of information on every aspect of the union. We continue to keep all members informed via periodic emails. I think it is in this area that we need help from the local leaders to ensure that the state association has as many email addresses as possible so that the information gets to as many of our members as possible. We have completed the redesign of our state publication “All Hands” and to date have published two issues. The third issue is due out soon. At this time I wish to acknowledge and thank Brother Bob King! I commend brother King on his dedication and diligence in the production 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. Most recently, the PFANJ attended a meeting with over 40 other State and Provincial leaders to discuss the issues at hand in the state and the country.

Our Corporate Partners Program has grown since last year, and we now have ten. On behalf of all the members of the PFANJ, I wish to thank our Corporate Partners for aligning with us to enhance the benefits of all our members. You walked through our Corporate Partners displays in order to get into this room; I hope you take the time to see what they have to offer your membership.

I wish to commend Brother Jeff Holtz on his determination to have a steady flow of PFANJ apparel and merchandise. He continues to keep something new for the members. Prior to Jeff taking over the apparel, we had a very limited stock. Since Jeff has taken over, the PFANJ logo is seen more and more. Thank you Brother Holtz for all that you do. I do appreciate it.

The PFANJ is still a respected voice in Trenton and throughout the state. We continue to have working relations with the Governor's office. Although recent events have strained those relations, we will continue to fight for the rights of firefighters! 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 work close 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.

Our legislative agenda is still very much active, coordinated by 1st Executive Vice President George Borek. Brother Borek continues to interact with the New Jersey State AFL-CIO labor representatives. Brother Borek will give his report during the convention, but to mention two very important pieces of legislation is the Thomas P. Canzanella Twenty-First Century First



Responders Act, sponsored by Senator Sweeney (S-569) and our bill sponsored by Senator VanDrew (S-2783) to allow certain members who were put into the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) to transfer into the Police and Fireman's Retirement System (PFRS). Copies of both these bills are included in your convention packet. With the assistance of the IAFF, the PFANJ has produced a booklet that we can give to our state legislators to assist them with the facts on the TPC 1st Responders Act.

Labor issues have been diligently coordinated by 2nd 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).

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 2000. That lawsuit is still ongoing. When the state legislators passed a bill this year to underfund our pension system again, we petitioned the Judge to allow us to amend and add this most recent attack on our pension system to our original complaint. On May 1st the Judge ruled, in our favor, and allowed us to amend the complaint without having to bring a completely separate lawsuit. The Judge has to reschedule the court date. We will continue our fight to protect our pension system.

Our Federal Firefighters are faced with the impending consolidation of bases on October 1st and closing of others. They have been working with each other, the IAFF and PFANJ to ensure that the members are afforded every avenue available to them.

Our nation is in the midst of a swine flu outbreak. The IAFF has issued numerous alerts through emails and the websites. We have posted and emailed these alerts and advisories from the CDC. We urge all affiliates to stay abreast of all the advisories.



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.

Although I have saved the next individual for last to thank, I and the PFANJ owe him a great deal. His support over this past year and before has never wavered. 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 our 1st District IAFF Vice President Kevin Gallagher.

Our strength, fortitude and dedication will carry us through the years to come, and I look forward to the continued success of the PFANJ. I thank you for the opportunity to lead this great organization, and I hope you all enjoy and benefit from the convention.

