

President's Report November 2008

Respectfully Submitted – Dominick Marino, President

IAFF NEWS:

The amount of the PSOB benefit, after adjusted for inflation, is now **\$315,746.00** (last year it was \$303,064.00) for eligible deaths occurring after **October 1, 2008** and for eligible disabilities occurring on or after November 29, 2007.

IAFF TO CREATE THINNER, LIGHTER SCBA

Washington, DC -- The Department of Homeland Security has awarded the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) a \$2 million contract to develop a new pressure vessel that will make the self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) worn by first responders substantially thinner and lighter.

Smaller, lighter SCBA will improve fire fighter safety.

"The IAFF is proud of its record as the leader in the development of projects that provide direct benefits to fire fighter health and safety. With all the recent technological developments and new materials we can work with, it's time to fast-track the introduction of new, lighter, less stressful, but highly protective equipment," IAFF General President Harold Schaitberger said.

The cylinders that contain the pressure vessels in existing SCBA account for much of the weight and size of the units. The weight and profile of those cylinders has been associated with increased rates of injury and fatalities for emergency responders.

The IAFF is working with Vulcore Industrial in Fort Wayne, Indiana, to use technology, engineering and new materials to modify the pressure vessel in a way that will reduce the weight and make it smaller and more flexible.

In initial prototype designs, the new pressure vessel offers an approximate 60 percent weight reduction over conventional SCBA cylinders. Prototypes also have a substantially smaller profile, measuring two inches in depth. Pressure vessels on conventional SCBA cylinders measure seven inches in depth.

The design braids new, thin, tubular pressure vessels in the harness assembly, instead of the large cylinders used today sitting on top of the harness assembly, allowing for greater mobility in confined spaces. Unlike conventional cylinders which contain air pressures up to 5000 psi, the new vessels won't fragment if they're ruptured. A punctured pressure vessel would simply vent contained air.

Members of Fort Wayne, IN, Local 124 have tested the prototypes in simulated confined space entry.

The IAFF's contract with DHS spans a 15-month period. The research and development is expected to result in a new, commercially available SCBA.

"The IAFF is confident that a new generation of lighter, low-profile SCBA will be available to the fire service when this important research concludes, and our members will be safer for it," Schaitberger said.

Technical Advisory Committee of IAFF members will provide input for the integration, testing and introduction of the new pressure vessel technology. At the first meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee, several factors were identified that will help ensure a smooth transition of a new SCBA to the fire service.

Pension Litigation:

We have reached out to our legal team for an update and we will post it on the Website. The next day in court is scheduled for December 19th.

PFRS:

As you were made aware the State of New Jersey wanted to use \$500,000,000.00 from the pension system (the entire pension system – State Police, Teachers, Police and Fire, etc) to move the Governor's stimulus package for the State of New Jersey. It is the Governors plan to invest pension money into local New Jersey Banks at a rate of 2½% to 4% as opposed to 1% Treasury bills. The money that would be invested would be FDIC insured. The other reason behind this is that the market was doing so poorly that they wanted to invest in something that was at least guaranteed and insured not to lose money. As much as we are always concerned when the State of New Jersey looks at our pension system as a bank that they can go to when they are in trouble, this investing of the pension money is well within the system's investing function to perform.

2008 Federal Legislator's Election:

In the three districts that we worked in we were successful in getting one elected. In the 3rd Congressional district John Adler was successful in winning that district. In the 7th and the 5th congressional districts the candidates we endorsed were not successful, Stender and Shulmann.

The presidential candidate that the IAFF backed won, so we'll see what the future holds for our federal legislative agenda.

PFANJ Constitution and By-Laws:

We are in the process of getting the Constitution and By-Laws printed and will be mailing a copy to each president. I ask that all presidents contact the state office to verify the correct address.

PFANJ Legislative agenda:

In the coming months the PFANJ will be contacting legislators to get the Thomas P. Canzanella 21st Century Health Bill (S569 and A1330) on a committee agenda so we can start moving this bill. Once we get it into committee we will be reaching out to all the local leadership to contact their respective legislator to gain support. This is a very important piece of legislation for all firefighters throughout the state. Another piece of legislation is to get our members who are in PERS the ability to get into PFRS. We have reached and have secured a member to introduce this piece of legislation. Since it is a pension bill, timing is everything. Much support will be needed for this also. We have also been told of a draft being drawn up and looking for sponsors that states:

AFFF (Assistance to Fire Fighter's Families) Act

Permits the State of New Jersey to pay a one-time benefit to families of fire service personnel if they die or are killed in the line of duty or sustain a debilitating injury resulting in a permanent disability.

On Thursday November 13th we testified on two bills, S668 and A3249 – testimony and synopsis of the bills is included in this hand-out. Both bills were released favorably from each committee. Although the Pensions and Health Commission recommended to not enact A3249, it was referred to the Assembly appropriations committee.

New bills that were introduced that concern the PFANJ are:

A3436 – Increases membership of PFRS board of trustees

A3434 – Establishes that board of fire commissioners provide emergency medical services to areas encompassing each fire district.

A list of legislative bills that the PFANJ are tracking is on the website.

A complete list of legislative bills was handed out at a previous meeting. If you need another copy or did not get a copy, you can go on our website (www.pfanj.org) and under governmental affairs print out a copy.

The Economy:

There still does not seem to be a light at the end of the tunnel for the economy. I cannot stress enough that now more than ever all locals need to be mindful of the financial stability or non-stability of their respective municipalities. If you are going into negotiations, make sure you have all the facts and be very resourceful and crafty. Remember, we have EARNED everything we were able to negotiate; no one just gave it to us.

Retired members – our 7th district is working to get all our retired members back in the process. The reason the 7th district was formed was because of all the knowledge that our retired members have in the many years of negotiating and dealing with mayors and council members. This knowledge is vital to our members and we want to maintain it. We urge all of our current local leaders to get to the office a name and address list of all the retiree's so that we can mail them information as to the 7th district.

Department of Personnel:

There will be an announcement in December for Deputy Chief's test. The remainder of the Company Officers test results should be out by January 2009.

Is Sleep deprivation affecting the quality of your life?

We are in the process of putting a program together for firefighters through a number of credible institutions. Once we get the program in place, we will notify all locals.

February Meeting – MDA BOOT CAMP

The February meeting will be held at the Ocean Place in Long Branch.
<http://www.oceanplaceresort.com/>

The following is also in the handout this month:

IAFF Local 3091 – Texas Hold'em Tournament to Benefit the Sean Fund
NJ Juvenile Fire setter intervention conference flyer
IAFF Local's 286, 4070 & 3994 – care packages for our troops drive
St. Barnabas Health & Safety flyer
PFANJ Holiday gathering flyer
PFANJ Valor award application

Important dates and events:

December 7th – 9th, 2008 – IAFF Affiliate Leadership Training Summit (ALTS) – Phoenix, AZ
December 15th, 2008 – Holiday Gathering with Local and Federal Legislators – Trenton NJ
January 14, 2009 – PFANJ State meeting
January 17, 2009 – 20th Annual St. Barnabas Burn Foundation FF Health & Safety Seminar

February 6th – 8th, 2009 – IAFF Attorneys' Conference – Miami, FL
February 11, 2009 – PFANJ State meeting
March 1st – 6th, 2009 – IAFF Political Training Academy – Washington DC
March 15th – 18th, 2009 – IAFF Legislative Conference – Washington DC
April 4, 2009 – PFANJ Valor awards Brunch – Hyatt of Jersey City
June 15th – 19th, 2009 – IAFF EMS Conference –
August 16th – 19th, 2009 – IAFF Affiliate Leadership Training Summit (ALTS) – Denver, CO
September 19th, 2009 – IAFF Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial – Colorado Springs, CO
November 8th – 12th, 2009 – IAFF Redmond Conference – Los Angeles, CA

