



BURNING ISSUES



Official Publication of Colorado's Professional Fire Fighters

Reaching Out-CPFF Newsletter

By Aaron S. Jonke

The Colorado Professional Fire Fighters has been working to protect fire fighters for many years. Under the skillful leadership of Randy Atkinson & Ray Rahne the CPFF has grown into a powerful union that carefully established political relationships & ties that have resulted in bettering the lives of fire fighters in the state.

But anymore fire fighters are busier than ever and seldom take the time to realize how hard others are working for them and the benefits that has produced.

That simply has to change! We as fire fighters need to stop taking our careers for granted and be

more active in protecting our professions. The best way to do that is through education.

The newsletter will be emailed out to members. We will start on a quarterly basis but hope that more and more affiliates have contributions. There is a never ending amount of effort going into protecting our safety, wages, and benefits and spending a few minutes to read about the CPFF and whats going on in the state will help us better understand how fire fighters have been successful through hard work and dedication to one another. Remember we wren't entitled to what we get, we work hard for it!

Please feel free to email any suggestions you have to help make the newsletter something you want

Fire Fighters Score Big Victory In The House

By Aaron S. Jonke

Fire fighters have taken a big step towards gaining recognition. On July 1st the House voted in favor of the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act. This act will finally give fire fighters a voice in safety and their work conditions.

The bill is expected to go to the Senate as a free standing bill. Here we can expect a fight. The Senate is already being besieged by enemies of fire fighters. City managers, The National Right To Work Committee (a cute name for an anti labor organization!) are already working to kill our voice. They have an organized attack aimed at being sure fire fighters never have the right to speak on their safety and the safety of their communities.

Here in Colorado we have been shut down by a Governor that wouldn't keep his word and have already

seen the Denver Post editorials slamming Colorado's fire fighters right to be recognized. Sen. Udall has committed to vote for us, but Sen. Bennett has not been receptive to supporting the IAFF's/AFL-CIO's top legislative agenda. We must fight back!

URGENT CALL TO ACTION

All fire fighters are asked to call our Senators to ask for support. We must fight hard against those wishing to silence fire fighters and ensure we have the right to protect ourselves

Senator Bennet (202) 224-5852

Senator Udall (202) 224-5941

[Click here for speaking points](#)

[Click here to Email Sen. Bennet](#)

50th IAFF Convention

The IAFF 50th Convention will be held this year in sunny San Diego. The convention will be held between August 21st-27th.

At the convention delegates from across the United States and Canada will be on hand to set the direction of the IAFF over the next two years. The format is very similar to a union meeting.

Affiliates are allowed to submit resolutions that are similar to a motion that is presented on the floor of your union meeting. These resolutions are submitted by and are analyzed for cost before being submitted to committees for recommendation.

The committees are comprised of our peers from across the IAFF. They take a hard look at the resolution and vote on whether or not to recommend the proposal to the floor.

Once on the floor its anybody's game! Here about 2000 fire fighters debate the

resolutions and set the course of the IAFF.

Fire fighters come from all walks of life and this makes our convention one of the best in the union movement. It is truly a democratic process where everyone has the right to speak on an issue.

This process is what makes a union great. It allows the voices to be heard and intelligently debated among professional fire fighters. Here major changes in safety and legislation are started and have a real impact on the lives of every fire fighter in the nation. An impact that can be felt for generations.

Be sure your local attends this critical event your future depends on it!

[Click Here For Convention Info](#)

You Have The Keys

It's your bus or maybe in this case your fire truck now drive it!

The IAFF Convention has brought fire fighters together in what could easily be the most productive meeting in the fire service. More important changes come from our union than any other fire related organization...PERIOD.

If you want to make a change or see a new direction for fire fighters don't be afraid to try.

Make sure your affiliate takes part in the convention and be an active part of protecting your future!



MICHAEL D. MCNIELL WESTERN REGIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS CONFERENCE

By Aaron S. Jonke

This summer fire fighters from the Western half of the United States met to discuss the resolutions that will be brought to the convention.

They do this to take an early critical look at the resolutions to be sure that they aren't too costly or something that could be harmful to their members.

Additionally it allows affiliates to work together to pass or block resolutions because of the disbursed voting blocks throughout the Western states.

The conference is named for our very own Michael D. McNiell who was a pioneer in the fire fighter union movement and a mentor to many of our leaders.

Executive Board

Randy Atkinson
President
303-308-1992

Ray Rahne
Secretary Treasurer
303-619-2462

Dave Blagg
Vice President
719-671-0263

Steve Clapham
Vice President
303-746-8851

J.J. Halsey
Vice President
719-209-1702

Mike Rogers
Trustee
303-884-6614

Michael Frainier
Trustee
303-908-7334

Dennis Eulberg
Trustee
303-425-5315

Scott Rogers
Sergeant At Arms
303-908-7482

Click name to email.

Legislative Session Wrap Up

By Dennis Eulberg

The CPFF was representing the interests of the members during the 120 days of the legislative session that wrapped up on May 12th.

President Atkinson worked with Steve Clapham and Dennis Eulberg in the gold domed statehouse.

This session the CPFF did not have any legislation of our own but fire fighters actively participated in a number of other pieces of legislation that affect labor and working families in Colorado.

There were four bills that dealt with FPPA changes that all were supported and signed by the Governor. These included term extensions for and authority of the FPPA Board members, increasing member contribution limits, and defined benefit plan criteria.

There were a total of six bills introduced regarding

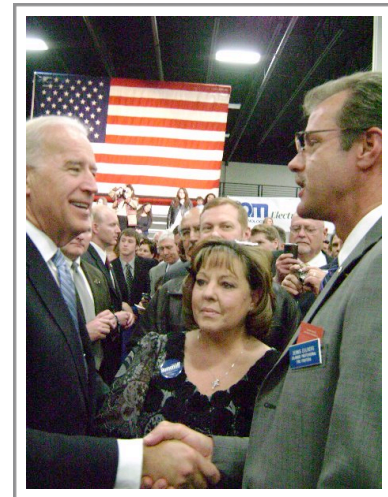
Workers Compensation and five of those passed! These bills that passed dealt with a worker's satisfaction survey, changes to the Worker's Comp Act on interference, rights of worker's when filing claims, and elimination of financial incentives for denied claims.

The bill that failed was addressing the rights of worker's to be under surveillance after making a claim.

The CPFF also helped the Fraternal Order of Police with lobbying their bill of rights. After working to get this bill out of committee it was pulled due to not having enough support to pass the Senate. This was an unfortunate situation in such that friends of labor would not support a bill dealing with due process and representation for law enforcement officers.

CPFF lobbyists also represented the

members at Vice President Biden's event in Denver.



State Congressional candidate interviews for the fall election have begun, and are working on local campaigns to help firefighter friendly candidates get elected to the State house.

PRESUMPTIVE CANCER

By Ray Rahne

Fire fighter Presumptive Cancer issues continue to be one of the hot topics for the CPFF. The CPFF presently has 10 Presumptive Cancer cases moving through the states Workers Compensation system and that system is extremely complicated. The reason this is a very complicated and difficult to navigate is to frustrate and discourage workers from using the system.



The CPFF has experienced significant hurdles in ensuring that fire fighters received the benefits of the law we fought so hard to pass, but unfortunately as more and more case present themselves we are getting better at making sure our members get a fair shake.

The CPFF is here to help members that are dealing with the cancers listed in the Presumptive Cancer law move forward with their Workers Compensation cancer case.

The first step is the responsibility of the fire fighter or his/her local union and that is to make sure that your workers compensation claim is made in a timely fashion. **THIS IS CRITICAL!** Failure to make a proper claim in time could

jeopardize your claim. Next the CPFF needs to be notified by the fire fighter with cancer or their union in order to help them!

The CPFF has retained a lawyer to help us legally move these complicated cases through the system. The CPFF also has the Michael McNeill Cancer Fund to help members offset the cost of expert witness fees. We are also in the process of having an expert witness from National Jewish. There are many ways the CPFF can help a member with cancer so please contact us so we can help you fight the beast. Stay safe and remember the CPFF is here to help you reach the ultimate goal of a great career and a healthy retirement!



MICHAEL D. MCNEILL CANCER FUND

Mike was friend to many of us and championed fire fighter causes like no other. His untimely passing due to an aggressive form of cancer led to a cancer fund in his name. If you contract cancer contact the CPFF immediately to see if this fund can help you in your fight to ensure you receive the coverage provided by state law.

WHAT FLOOD? TENNESSEE FIRE FIGHTERS NEED OUR HELP!

By Aaron S. Jonke

On the first of May the state of Tennessee was devastated by flooding. 13 inches of rain



struck within 2 days. It was a devastating flood that killed more than 30 people. But where was the media coverage? It was a blurb on the news that barely took any air time at all. There is always news to report but it is a shame that the national media turned its back on our fellow Americans in need.

Another fact remains unreported on and that is the story of the fire fighters that waded through the dirty water and risked their lives to help their communities. There are many stories of our brothers & sisters risking their lives and almost be victims of the floods themselves. These fire fighters were on the front line of this

disaster as they are in every disaster that our nation faces.

The other part of the story that is missing is the fire fighters families that were equally affected by the flooding. 42 fire fighters homes were damaged by the flooding. They sat by by worrying about their fire fighters responding into the dangerous waters and suffered from the ravages of the floods as well.

Our brothers and sisters need your help now. They need to rebuild their lives and are in desperate need of the day to day basics that you and I take for granted. If you can spare a little the IAFF will be sure that your donation makes it to Tennessee and goes to assist fire fighters affected by the flooding.

Your donation will go to the IAFF Disaster Relief Fund and will help professional fire fighters in need. All donations are tax deductible.



NEW LOOK FOR CPFF WEBSITE

By Aaron S. Jonke

The CPFF has a great website! But the fact remains that it under utilized. Whether its getting the latest news or using the electronic system to push candidates or address political issues our affiliates aren't using the websites full capabilities!

To try to stimulate both the members and the leaders into

using our capabilities to their fullest the CPFF will be undergoing a website facelift. The website will be equipped with new and exciting graphics and more content.

But as the end user your input is really important. What do you want to see out of our website. A blog? More legal issue resources?

Links to political information? Classified ads?

Email me and give me your ideas for a better website!

[CLICK HERE TO GIVE INPUT](#)

THE NEXT GENERATION OF SCBA'S

By Aaron S. Jonke



There have been many questions swirling around the development of the next generation SCBA's. Whether on the internet or here locally there are questions that abound. How much will they weigh? What will they look like? Will they be affordable? So I thought I would take the time to answer some of these questions.

Over the years I have been blessed and have had some amazing union experiences. Of all of those experiences one of the most rewarding has been working on the Technical Advisory Committee for the next generation of SCBA's.

First the IAFF needs to be thanked again for being the leaders in fire fighter safety. They

developed a comprehensive plan to bring these these new SCBA's to reality. I believe this will be the most revolutionary safety change to fire fighting in my lifetime. And we can thank the same union that has driven virtually every major safety change in our profession for years! The IAFF continues to prove its necessity and value to fire fighters the world.

The project started when the IAFF was approached by Volcore Industrial who presented a cutting edge pressure vessel design for SCBA's. The inventor is a brilliant man named Stan Sanders who truly wanted to help fire fighters and was tired of good ideas being shelved by big industry.

At this point the IAFF's Rich Duffy sprang into action. Rich is a

A SNEEK PEEK AT THE NEW IAFF DRIVEN FLAT PACK

The entire SCBA should weigh around 18 lbs and the low profile design will revolutionize fire fighting (see picture above)

The system will be designed to use current face pieces to help save departments money

The pressure vessels will hold 45 minutes of air, but with the reduced stress imposed they should last longer than our current 45 minute bottles



Backpack style straps for more comfort

This will hold the pressure vessels, but this pack will flex allowing fire fighters greater mobility

Because the pressure vessels do not have any shrapnel hazard they should be filled using a "quick fill" system

NEXT GENERATION SCBA'S CONTINUED

true bulldog on fire fighter issues who has the ability to cut to the quick and develop realistic plans and that's exactly what he did! The IAFF developed an idea to chase a grant and start work on the new SCBA's. The IAFF received a \$2.7 million grant from the Department of Homeland Security and they have never looked back.

The IAFF assembled the Technical Advisory Team (TAC) to have real input from fire fighters on what they wanted to see in new SCBA's. After all these are the people who would be using them and risking their lives.

The TAC met and reviewed the project. The new SCBA's or Flat Packs were amazing! The consisted of blow molded Hytrel pressure vessels specially wrapped in pre-impregnated carbon. This changed the design & safety dramatically. If catastrophically damaged the new pressure vessels don't explode sending deadly shrapnel through the air or fire fighter, but instead rip and safely let the air escape.

The new flat packs will be much smaller than the bulky predecessors. The pressure vessels will only be 2 3/4" thick and will sit close to the backs of fire fighters. The new packs will be flexible and ergonomically designed to move with the fire fighter and not be cumbersome annoyance. This low profile design will allow us to move into tighter areas without problems. Long gone will be the days of pushing a cylinder through a tight space to affect a rescue or to save your own butt!

Additionally the new Flat Packs will be extremely light and should cut the operating weight in half! That's right half! The total weight of the new system should be close to 18 pounds. This will eliminate the strain and stress on a fire fighters body and will result in fewer fire fighter injuries. Without the added stress of lugging the old SCBA's around fire fighters would be able operate in rescue situation for a longer period with reduced stress. Gone will be the heavy straps digging into your chest and compressing your lungs and diaphragm. These new packs will allow us to work longer in tighter areas without experiencing the physical toll that slows us down.

The TAC committee worked hard to ensure that the end users needs were met. First the TAC set a goal of making the pressure vessels hold 45 minutes of breathable air. The original idea was 30 minutes, but the committee was hard and fast that if we got stuck in a dangerous environment we wanted as much air as we could have. The experts at Volcore quickly re-tooled and changed their entire manufacturing process to meet our request. To me this demonstrated their professionalism and desire to create a SCBA that really made a difference even at the cost of their bottom line.

After about a year the new product was brought to the all of the SCBA manufacturers together and explained the concept. There seemed to be some reluctance to the idea but the TAC made it clear that this was the direction that fire fighters wanted to move and that any ideas of scraping this

important project wouldn't be tolerated.

The manufacturers were given all of the specifications and what the TAC expected from their new designs. After a selection process MSA had the most innovative design and were awarded the grant .

There should be working units being tested in the field by September of this year. At what speed these come to market should be within a year of the final testing project. The TAC set the goal that these new SCBA's only cost 20%-25% more than the units we are using today.

Other manufacturers will likely be developing their own product and hopefully they will utilize the ideas of the TAC. The bottom line the new SCBA's have to be lighter and be a better tool for fire fighters. With today's technology there is simply no reason to be using tools that aren't a bigger aid in helping us perform a dangerous job.

This year I have submitted a resolution that asks the IAFF to lobby for funding for the purchase of these new SCBA's. I strongly believe that these new flat packs will have a major impact on our safety and they are critical to IAFF members. Once again a the credit must go to the IAFF for driving fire fighter safety and of course Stan Sanders who had the vision to develop this incredible new pressure vessel system.

FIRE FIGHTER POLITICS ON THE HORIZON

By Aaron Jonke

As a fire fighter you probably wonder why we are even involved in politics. Our system seems broken



and the people we count on have been less than honest to us. Why would working class fire fighters choose to be such a big part of this dirty system?

The answer is really quite simple, if we weren't we would be crushed! The fact is that as fire fighters we are a very large part of our cities budget which makes us a big part of the political discussion.

Another way to put it is that we are a big draw on tax dollars. For instance in Denver the fire department budget accounts for nearly 13% of the total budget. That is a huge sum of money and for the most part a massive majority of that goes to pay and benefits for the fire fighters. It always made me wonder how some of my fellow fire fighters could be such staunch crusaders against taxes when they received such a large part of them! In any case it is critical that we stay involved in the political chess game to ensure the men and women who risk their lives and deserve that pay and those benefits. If we didn't we would be rolled over by those who choose to be players in of the game of politics.

The upcoming year will once again be a tough one. We will be faced with amendments 60 & 61, as well as proposition 101 which are designed to eliminate the state and the cities ability to take in tax revenue. As a result it would be impossible to fund our fire departments across the state. Smaller taxes and smaller government equal smaller fire departments and smaller wages for fire fighters. The CFFF has been involved in this fight since the beginning and everyone of us needs to realize the massive damage these misguided attacks can do our ability to make an honest wage and provide for our

families. There is no doubt fire fighters will be called upon to lead in this fight.

On the election front it will be a difficult fight. Some people we counted on failed us miserably! Yep thats right Governor Ritter's crushing of most substantial labor bills will hurt our friends at the polls. But we have to fight to ensure that we are able to protect ourselves. Can you imagine if we lost our friends in the state house in 2010. I promise Colorado's not so great workers compensation system would look a heck of a lot worse right now. We must still be sure we control at least one side of the house or the governors seat to help hold back the attacks we have seen on labor in recent years. If we don't keep our friends in office we can expect an erosion of safety, wages, and benefits like we see in the right to work states of the south where labor has been neutralized.

As fire fighters we are known to be fighters and we must continue to be involved and

The Colorado AFL-CIO recently held its Convention On Political Education (COPE). The COPE is where delegates from all of the Colorado affiliates join together to look at the upcoming year in politics. Our challenges and the issues we will be facing are discussed and a strategy is laid out. The delegates also take on the tough job of making endorsements at the meeting.

At the convention fire fighters led a charge to stay neutral in the senate race. This was important because the mood of several unions was to endorse Sen. Bennett. However fire fighters have struggled to make any headway on gaining his support of the Public Safety Employee-Employer Cooperation Act. This act would give fire fighters the same rights the private sector has enjoyed for over 75 years and finally provide us with a voice, not only in collective bargaining, but also in safety.

After stirring speeches the fire fighters achieved their goals and no endorsement was made. This is why it is so critical we are involved in politics at all levels.

CPFF FOUNDATION CONTINUES TO GROW

By Aaron S. Jonke

The CPFF Foundation started with a motion after 9-11 in an effort to protect our fellow fire fighters and there families here at home.

The initial monies came for a Grungy Grill Contest by Red Robin and slowly started to grow from there.



the Foundation that is the top producer for the Foundation. What does your local union do to help with the cause?

This year there have been even more changes. The CPFF Foundation wanted to change our online presence.

A new website has been developed for the Foundation by Aaron Jonke. Now we have the ability donate online! Hopefully this will allow us to capture a little more for our brothers and sisters in need. We can now also fill out an application online. No more trying

Today the CPFF Foundation is truly making a difference. To date the Foundation has given over \$39,000 to our members and their families in need. The foundation has donated to injured family members, members with extensive medical bills, and to those families who have experienced the ultimate loss.

to figure out who has the paper work or where to turn it in. This along with a new look will hopefully bring more attention to our much needed Foundation.



Now the Foundation has a fund balance of over \$225,000! That seems like a lot but in reality protecting over 3000 members can be costly. It is the goal of the Foundation that every affiliate have at least 1 fund raiser a year for the foundation. West Metro holds a super golf tournament which is a huge reason for our success. Denver holds the annual Jonke Bros. Poker Tournament. The Denver Fire Department Federal Credit Union donates interest from their credit card program to



Calendar

July 13-15, 2010

Michael D. McNeill Western Regional
Reno, NV

July 17, 2010

Brian Kopp Memorial Golf Tournament
Inverness Golf Club

August 22-27, 2010

50th IAFF Convention
San Diego, CA

September 11, 2010

Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial
Colorado Springs, CO

Editor

AARON S. JONKE



Aaron is a Denver Fire Fighter who has been active in the fire fighter

union movement for 15 years. Aaron also represents fire fighters on the Colorado AFL-CIO Executive Council & Board.