

## Five State Summit Meeting - Evesham, NJ - February 26, 2005

### EDIAFC Board Members

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### State Chiefs Associations

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#### Maryland

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#### New Jersey

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Charlie Moots	NJ State Chiefs		

#### New York

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#### Pennsylvania

Ed Mann	State Fire Commissioner	717-651-2204	<a href="mailto:emann@state.pa.us">emann@state.pa.us</a>
Tom Markey	2 <sup>nd</sup> VP Keystone		<a href="mailto:Markey@eaglefirecompany.org">Markey@eaglefirecompany.org</a>

Note: All of the Board is listed regardless of attendance. State reps are listed for either of the prior two meetings. They will be deleted after two missed meetings.

## **The Summit convened at 0900 on Saturday, February 26, 2005**

The meeting began with a presentation by Caryn Tilton and Crosby Grindle from Fire-Rescue GPO. The presentation was open to the public.

### **Lunch**

#### **Teleconference with IAFC President Bob DiPoli**

The Board and Five State Chiefs representatives held a teleconference with IAFC President Bob DiPoli to discuss the status of the NFA and USFA budgets. Bob reported briefly on some health issues which had affected him over the past weeks. Bob reported that a meeting had been held with 17 key fire service organizations along with David Paulison of the USFA and representatives of the Congress and the media. Five consensus goals were arrived at. These goals were sent out to everyone along with a list of the participants in an IAFC Member Alert. They are available on the EDIAFC web site at [www.ediafc.org/news.html](http://www.ediafc.org/news.html) if anyone did not receive them.

Bob said the fire service had a united front within which the CFSI would take the lead in bringing our goals to the congressional leaders. Bob said that the fire service was poised to have the biggest influence of any group on the Congress. Bob said the fire service showed a true harmony at the summit.

Bernie Cohan thanked Bob for being on the call and for his report.

Bob Stahl asked what kind of action plan was decided on. Bob DiPoli said that CFSI was the ideal group to work with the congress on the issues, but there will be several other actions. He said there would be a meeting with the Secretary of Homeland Security and several of the key fire service leaders including himself. There will also be a grass roots effort of contacting Congressmen. Bob hoped that the result would be a piece of legislation or perhaps an Executive order out of the Administration that would address some of the concerns.

Bill Walton asked if Curt Weldon in his new roll as Vice Chairman of Homeland Security would provide us with some clout. Bob responded that Curt's office was represented at the summit and they took part in the discussions. Therefore, Curt should be well informed on the issue. Other Congressional staff were also there and should have seen the resolution of the fire service. There were also key representatives from the Administration who were present. There was discussion of moving the USFA and NFA into a different place in the administration. Bob said he was anxious to see what Bill Manning and other media who were in attendance would have to say about the summit.

Ken Anderson asked if there would be some talking points out of the summit that would be available for use prior to April 7th's CFSI Meeting. Bob responded that he would make sure that occurred.

Bernie Cohan thanked Bob again for his report.

Jim Seavey asked if there had been any discussion about the fact that Bill Killen now worked for a private sector fire service provider. Bob said no discussion had arisen over the matter. Bob said he would be interested to see how it played out with the IAFF. He has confidence in Bill Killen.

Bill Walton asked if there was anything that the Board or 5 State Associations could do to help with the USFA and NFA issue. Bob said the main issue was the IAFC staff needed to get out the information about the summit to the members. There was no specific request for action from Bob at this time.

Ted Lowden asked if the IAFC was going to provide the information from the summit to some of the organizations who had been actively vocal about the issues. Bob said they would try to get out as much information as possible. Ted suggested that it was important to do so and said groups like the NFA instructors and Alumni Association should be made aware of the progress being made.

The teleconference was concluded.

## **Reports of the States**

### **New York**

Tom LaBelle reported NY is moving their conference from Syracuse to Lake George. They have a two year contract with an option for three. Eastern is still invited to have the Eastern with them in 2006. Tom would like a response from the Division as soon as possible including a list of the resources needed by the Division for the conference. NY is looking to rotate their conference around the state. They will not be back in Syracuse for some time.

NY has developed a relation with the Fire Marshal's Associations and they will have their conference concurrent with the State Chiefs.

NY has a spring and summer training series. Details are on their web site and ours.

Tom and Caryn Tilton are working together on E-Learning opportunities to partner for mutual benefits. Tom is looking at ways to diversify the NYS AFC income streams. Tom said he is not concerned the Fire Rescue GPO competing with NY's trade show but there are concerns about their value ads. Tom stated that there needs to be discussions of how the state associations and GPO can work together. Tom believes the opportunity for the GPO is more in member services rather than group purchasing.

Tom stated they are working on a vendor guide. Tom will send copies to meeting attendees. The guide will also have information on NY purchasing law. It is a good fund raiser for the NY Chiefs. It is a good resource for both vendors and the fire service. They sell many ads in the book.

## **Pennsylvania**

Tom Markey reported that the report on the Pennsylvania fire service was done and available. The report may be helpful in that it makes the case that the fire service is under funded. The PA state Advisory Board will meet and discuss implementation strategies for the report.

Tom said the Eastern's request for a \$500.00 sponsorship for the KOP conference was approved by the Keystone Chiefs.

## **New Jersey**

Chris Assenheimer reported that the state is considering establishing its own fire caucus. Assemblymen Fred Scalera who is also a fire chief is promoting the idea.

The NJ Chiefs are celebrating their 100th anniversary at the State Firemens Convention in Wildwood. The State Chiefs meeting will be September 15th in Wildwood NJ.

The NJ Division of Fire Safety Symposium is the same day as the EDIAFC conference in KOP and it will cause a conflict for NJ attendees.

Chief Cohan reported that the three major chiefs associations in NJ have formed an alliance. The NJ State Chiefs, Career Chiefs and Volunteers Chiefs make up the alliance. Its purpose is to provide a uniform voice for the NJ Fire Service. They are making good progress on gaining consensus on issues. The alliance wants to prevent conflicts between scheduling events in the state.

Ted Lowden praised the alliance and addressed the importance of communications and unity between the associations. He said this was extremely important to the success of the fire service to accomplish their goals. Chris Assenheimer mentioned the Division of Fire Service had also made efforts bring various fire service groups in NJ together. All of the NJ speakers mentioned that there were too many organizations representing the fire service in NJ which was a significant problem.

Chris Assenheimer said Fire Engineering hosted a summit at FDIC East for all of the NJ fire service organizations which promoted some dialogue between the groups..

There were questions about the success of FDIC East and the dilution of some many conferences. There was discussion about possibly eliminating vendor participation and asking vendors to simply sponsor mor educational opportunities. Bill Askenstedt said that conferences are supported by vendors and largely vendor driven.

Ken Anderson said the NJ Hazmat bill was signed into law. The Blue light law for emergency management responders has passed both houses and is awaiting the governor to sign. The career chiefs tenure bill is still pending but stalled. The NJ blue light laws for volunteers are being revamped. One proposal would allow light bars and electronic horns. The bill is moving forwarded but will likely be amended to remove the horn.

Ken discussed the State Fire Chiefs roll in state Homeland Security issues. Ken is the representative to the

NJ Homeland Security Council from the Jersey Chiefs. The NJ Division of Fire Safety has a department of preparedness which is new but effective.

### **Maryland**

Roger Steger report that the MD legislature has authorized a slot machine bill. Fire Departments are not mentioned in the bill. The MD fire service is looking to get a 5% share of the states revenue from the slots. There is a conflict between the MD House and Senate on the bills. The outcome is still uncertain.

Maryland is also working to develop a unified fire service voice for the state.

Ocean City is hosting a 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary on April 23, 2005. Invitations were passed out and are also available on the Eastern web site.

Jim Seavey reported that Montgomery County now has a County Fire Chief. It is changing the county operation and moving at a fast past. There were a lot of incentives given to volunteers to help sell the new administration. The County has started its own County Homeland Security Committee. There is also an Executive Director for the Volunteer Fire Association. The new chief reports directly to the County Executive. Jim is supporting Paul Sterling for 2<sup>nd</sup> VP of the MD Firemens Association.

### **Delaware**

Jim Watson reported that there was a petition to the IAFF by DE EMTs become a local which was approved by the IAFF. They have not petitioned for collective bargaining rights on DE law.

DE has a traffic management system which is designed to handle traffic and detour concerns in emergencies. There are issues about authority to close roads. There was also an issue of property damage by a fire chief trying to gain access to an emergency

DE has received 7 Fire Act Grants.

New Castle County celebrates their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in October.

DE is working on standardization and they have adopted the NIMs program.

The DVFA conference meets on September 15<sup>th</sup>. The same as New Jersey.

New Castle County has a new County Executive.

### **EDIAFC Conference & IAFC Conference**

(this was not reported on but is included for information only)

**Secretary Treasurer Bill Askenstedt**, reported that the **EDIAFC conference** will be held on Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup> in King of Prussia, PA. It will be a single day event. The conference will have a Memorial Service and Business Session in the morning, followed by lunch and 3 technical sessions TBA. Currently Kurt Weldon and Dennis Rubin have been invited speakers. The banquet will be Saturday evening and there will be a social event on Friday Evening. On Friday, May 13<sup>th</sup> there will be an Eastern Board Meeting at 9 AM and 5 State Summit meeting at 1PM. Bill reported that all of the details, directions, and hotel info, will be on the web site at [www.ediafc.org/conference.html](http://www.ediafc.org/conference.html). This info will be continually updated. The Memorial Service is being coordinated by Les Warrick and the Registration by King of Prussia. Conference brochures and registration forms will be available on line.

**The IAFC Conference** is in Denver on August 11-13, 2004 with pre-conference programs on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. The new format has exhibits on Friday and Saturday, and the banquet on Saturday night. There is no longer a need for a Sunday night stay. The Eastern hotel will be the Embassy Suites Downtown. This year the Eastern will be hosting a lunch rather than the normal breakfast. This will be on Friday between 11:30 and 1:00 PM in the Convention Center. The Room will be announced when determined. Full details of the conference can be found at <http://www.iafc.org/conferences/fri/index.asp> on the new IAFC web site. On line conference and hotel registration is also available here. Members should watch both the Eastern and IAFC web sites for updates on the conferences.

#### Fire Act Grants

There was a discussion about the equity of Fire Act Grants. Ken Anderson reported that at last count there had been 6,957 grants awarded for \$584,607,311.00. They break down by state as follows;

DE	6	919,381
MD	73	9,078,065
NJ	135	12,188,875
NY	394	29,870,155
PA	485	43,258,224

Certain aspects of building construction are now eligible like adding a training room or a generator.

**PSOB** There was a prolonged discussion of the PSOB benefits. The discussion centered around the eligibility of a 14 year old in Pennsylvania who was killed while responding to a fire call on his bicycle. The IAFC and NFFF have both agreed with the finding that the 14 year old was not eligible. Several other incidents were questioned.

Bob Stahl said he felt many other awards that have been given were less deserving than the 14 year old who was denied. The Board was fairly split on the eligibility issue in this instance. The discussion evolved into what minors could and could not do in terms of fire response. The consensus was that each state had somewhat different standards.

Bill Walton said the issue was very sensitive for both the IAFC and the NFFF. The IAFC Board felt it was better not to open the issue up by challenging the decision on the PSOB. Bill said he told the IAFC Board

that the Eastern supported covering the PA incident and supported Curt Weldon on this issue.

There was discussion on what if any action the Eastern should take related to the PSOB. Jim Seavey said that while he agreed with Bob Stahl on the PA incident, there may be a point where the Congress says this is too much and eliminates the benefit. He suggested instead that perhaps that the whole process be reviewed the IAFC and then the findings shared with other fire service groups to seek support.

**Evesham Membership** Chief Seavey asked how many meetings he needed to attend at Evesham before he could become a member. Chief Lowden replied that it did not matter how many he attended, he could never become a member.

**King of Prussia Board Meeting** There was a discussion of when the Board and 5 State meeting would occur at King of Prussia in May. The Secretary said the tentative schedule was may 13<sup>th</sup> at 9 AM for the Board and 1 PM for the 5 State Meeting. Bill Walton suggested inviting everyone to the Board Meeting and combining the two meetings. Ted Lowden suggested that we spend too much time on reports and then rush thru critical new business.

The Board consensus was that the meetings could be combined and that an Executive Session could be used if needed to discuss Board only issues. Bill Askenstedt said that the process could be greatly sped up if all of the officers submitted written reports which could be circulated in advance and not read at the meeting unless they contained action items. Bill said the States could also send their reports in advance since 50% of the reports were information items only and did not need to be discussed. This would allow more time for key issues.

Chief Cohan pointed out that the President elect was not present and needed to be involved in the decision. The Board in group said it was a Board decision and not the President's.

Roger Steger suggested distributing an agenda so that the states could come prepared for discussion of key issues. There was consensus from those present that there were many key issue worthy of discussion and that the experiences of one state were valuable to the future of others. It was agreed that discussion of what occurred in one state often was very beneficial to others and worth time to discuss. Ken Pienkowski said it seemed that we always were pressed for time at the end of the meetings when all of the most important material was discussed. It was recognized that we need restructure the meetings for better use of time.

Jack Gouty suggested having a Division calendar with all of the states submitting information to the Secretary for coordination and distribution. Bill Askenstedt said states should relay items of concern to him for distribution and putting those items on the agenda.

**Fire Rescue GPO** President Cohan discussed the GPO presentation. He said he was very disappointed with the program, He felt the presenters learned as much as the attendees. He thought the GPO has a lot to correct if they wish to succeed.

Ted Lowden said that we told the GPO they needed more fire related vendors and they acknowledged we were right. Bill Walton said that was the reason Crosby Grindle was hired by the GPO. Bill Askenstedt said

the presentation was very negative and apologetic. He bet that half the attendees probably still were not sure how to use the GPO. He said the presenters were not prepared. Bill said that Crosby made numerous notes on things that need to be fixed. He said the web site is still lacking, the help number is not available, and there were too many ambiguous areas. Jack Gouty discussed the problems he had trying to get a login even with the help of Caryn.

Bill Askenstedt said that corrections need to be made before we encourage people to try the GPO. Otherwise they will get turned off.

Ted Lowden commented on the efforts of his purchasing agent to work with the GPO. He said they were promised information and never got responses to phone calls or emails.

Bill Walton said the Eastern Board opted not to fund Jim Seavey as a representative to the advisory board as a purely business decision. Jim Seavey argued that the approach was short sighted and that the GPO would take time to evolve. He pointed out that the Advisory Board had already addressed many of the current problems with Andrew Forrester. He pointed out that the GPO staff has grown and they have added Caryn and Crosby as well as office staff. Jim apologized for missing the presentation in the morning. He said he had told Crosby that the Board was angry.

Ken Pienkowski said that despite Jimmy and the Advisory Board telling the GPO the web site was bad, it was still bad a year later. He pointed out that the GPO was sending people all of the country to shows so they could afford to pay for our representative to attend their meeting. Jim Seavey replied that he thought they only expected us to pay a minimal expense to show our commitment. He suggested that if we did not have faith that the GPO would succeed within three years, we should simply withdraw. Ken Pienkowski said he had doubts about the three year time frame based on the failures so far.

Jim Seavey made a comparison to Expedia.com and the number of changes they constantly make to improve their web site. Ted Lowden agreed he said he did not think Expedia turned on their web site until it worked.

Bill Askenstedt he specifically asked Caryn to address how to use the web site in her presentation. He said that despite the specific request, the presenters still could not walk someone through getting on line. Jim Seavey acknowledged the web site problems and said the Advisory Council was furious over the lack of progress. Bill said the GPO presentation was embarrassing. The goal was to teach people to use the GPO and instead it discouraged people from trying.

Bill also said that there was a major problem with the GPO vendors reporting their sales. He said that right now we are promoting a broken product and we need to pull it off the market until it is fixed. The Board's general consensus was in agreement.

Ken Anderson suggested that the GPO may be more used to dealing with the private sector than with government and that may be the reason for their lack of knowledge of government purchasing laws.

**Bob DiPoli Retirement** Bill Walton mentioned Bob Dipoli's retirement dinner. He asked the Secretary to

distribute the information which follows: The dinner will be Saturday, April 23, 2005 at the Needham Sheraton Hotel in Needham, Mass. The contact is Chief Paul Buckley, Needham Fire Department (781) 455-7580 or pbuckley@yown.needham.ma.us.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30.