

TEXAS

FIRE FIGHTER

2nd Quarter 2021 | www.TSAFF.org

TSAFF Peer Support Program:

NEW SUPPORT FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

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The Texas Fire Fighter Magazine

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Special Appointments

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Marc Clifford, Jimmy Hall, Leo Mendoza, Beau Simpson,

Trey Wells, James Williams

Health and Safety Committee - James Younger, chair,

Scott Robertson, Leo Mendoza, Daniel Buford, Chris Conner,

Luke Manion

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CONVENTION COUNTDOWN

Rockwall Fire Fighters Association L-5057 and Garland Fire Fighters Association L-1293 will welcome delegates to the 47th TSAFF Biennial Convention in July.



STATEWIDE NEWS

TSAFF affiliate leaders continue to represent firefighters at the state capitol. As COVID-19 restrictions lifted, activity increased, including with Plano L-2149 Secretary-Treasurer/PAC President Brad McCutcheon, Vice President Jaime Reyes PAC Secretary-Treasurer Jonathan Lawson, President Wesley Holland, Vice President Ray Fitch, and Vice President Nathan

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From the President

Meeting the Challenges for TSAFF Members

Overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic

President

John Riddle

I hope this newsletter finds you all healthy and safe as we continue into 2021.

I know that 2020 was an incredibly challenging year for Texas firefighters in many ways. From my perspective, I have been able to see the many ways that our affiliate Locals have stepped up to these challenges and continue to provide excellent service to the citizens of your communities.

I could not be more proud of the work that all of you do, day in and day out. For many of us, the challenges of 2020 undoubtedly brought new challenges for 2021 in terms of budgeting and operations - from the pandemic to the winter weather event in February.

Moving forward, I believe that we must first, take what we have learned over the last year and work to ensure that we are more prepared for the next pandemic.

Glenn Deshields will provide you with more details in our legislative update, but the pandemic has brought some interesting changes to the state capitol during this legislative

session as well. While we are diligently working to advance our legislative agenda, that you established at our TSAFF Legislative Convention in January 2020, we are also working on legislation that will improve our preparedness, as Texas firefighters, for the next pandemic.

The last year has also brought many challenges to the TSAFF in terms of how we deliver our services to each of you. Most of us have become far more familiar with the Zoom video interface than we would like to be. With social distancing and the inability to gather in large groups, TSAFF made the shift to providing training workshops online through Zoom.

Since July 2020, we have delivered 13 training/workshop sessions on a variety of subjects and have more to come. While certainly not optimal for those of us who enjoy in-person meetings, the online shift has given us the ability to continue to deliver the training and education so you can be more successful in your home locals. I do hope, however, that we will be able to get back together in person in the near future.



John Riddle
President

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Moving forward, the TSAFF executive board looks forward to the in-person convention in July. The convention will be held in Rockwall and will be jointly hosted by Rockwall L-5057 and Garland L-1293. We, of course, will continue to monitor the effects of the pandemic and make changes, if and when necessary, but our hope is to see all of you at the "Smoke on the Water" convention.

Even through the challenges that we have faced since our last convention, your TSAFF continues to have great momentum. Our legislative program continues to gain influence. Our service program continues to provide valuable assistance to our affiliate Locals with contract negotiations, disciplinary issues, contract grievances and much more. Our training program continues to adapt and improve. Our communications program is assisting more affiliate Locals with the local issues that they face - remotely and on the ground around the state. We continue to provide assistance



← PHOTO: In District 1 meetings, TSAFF President John Riddle recently met with El Paso L-51 members, along with TSAFF District 1 Vice President Bobby Whiteley and IAFF District 11 Vice President Sandy McGhee.

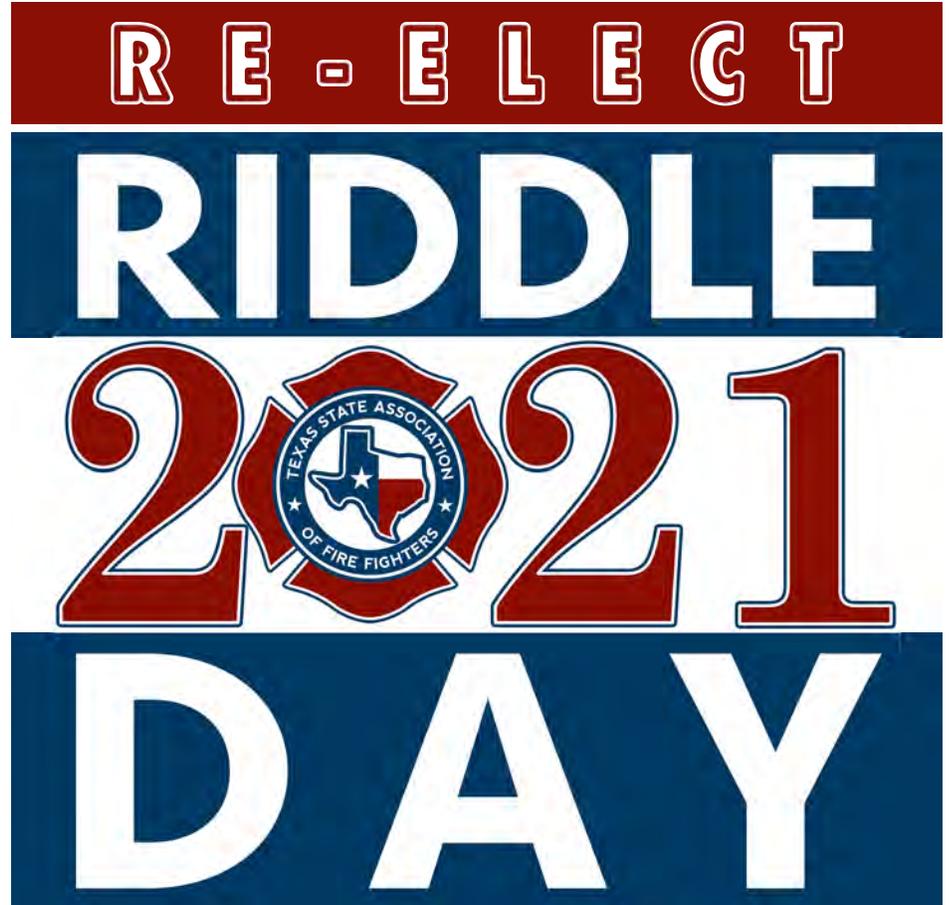
From the President

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“I could not be more proud of the work that all of you do”

on workers compensation coverage issues around the state, including court battles on cancer claims. Regardless of the issue, your TSAFF is ready, willing, and able to provide the assistance that you need.

Going into our 47th Biennial Convention, we will certainly have some important business to work through. I have no doubt that all of you will, once again, rise to the challenge and we will leave that convention continuing to build on the momentum that we have. I, for one, am looking forward to the work ahead. Please stay in touch. Let us know if there's anything your Local needs. Your good ideas are always welcome, of course. Until we see you in person or online, stay healthy and stay safe.



Preserve the Past

Please help ensure that the extraordinary work of TSAFF firefighters is included in our history.



We seek recent and historical fire and EMS incident photos and video for display at the upcoming TSAFF and the 2021 state association convention.

We will ensure original materials are handled carefully, credited if used, and returned. An FTP link to conveniently upload videos and photos is available.

If you can help or have questions, please contact us at your convenience.

Photo Credit: Plano Firefighters Association



From the Editor / Secretary-Treasurer

Looking Forward to TSAFF Convention

Secretary/Treasurer and Editor of the Texas Fire Fighter
Brandon Day

Now that 2020 has officially left the building, and the winter weather event of 2021 is over, let's start planning on getting things back to normal. We will start that by moving forward with an in-person convention in Rockwall July 12-15. I hope this is the start back to normalcy we have all wanted. As we begin to finalize the details, there are some important dates to remember:

- May 28 - Timely Resolutions Due
- July 12 - Opening Ceremonies

Most of us have just completed the first virtual convention of the IAFF. I hope that is something we can talk about in the future as a one-time event. We have so much more to gain from these events by being able to meet together in person and network with other leaders.

Another important date to keep in mind is May 15, 2021. For most of you that is when you will need to have your Form 990s filed with the IRS. If you are new to doing this or need help, please reach out to me and I will help guide you through the process.

Not everything in 2020 (and early 2021) was bad, however. One of the good things to come out of 2020 was the need to continue delivering education opportunities to our members and we accomplished this through a series of online training. These training have been well received and well attended. We have delivered 10 classes and have three more scheduled for early 2021. We have covered a variety of topics from service training to political training, from communications to the ever-popular (some say life-changing) secretary/treasurer training. We will continue to find ways to make this happen, but will start to focus on getting back to in-person training as well.

Last year, your TSAFF executive board,

started a statewide charitable foundation with the goal of being there more often for our members in their time of need. For now, our only active fundraising is through our partnership with 6th Street Winery in Wichita Falls. If you have not tried (or given as gifts) our special-edition TSAFF wines, I encourage you to do so. We get back a portion of every sale. We will continue to look for other opportunities to grow this fund. We also will be looking for other foundation fundraisers. Of course, because our foundation is a 501(c)3 charity, tax-deductible donations also are welcome. We received our first contribution recently. So, please think about the TSAFF foundation as you plan for tax season.

Perhaps you have noticed by the steady improvements in our recent TEXAS FIRE FIGHTER newsletters. We are striving to produce a better quality product. We have begun to sell ad space. I want to personally thank Houston firefighter Mack Newell, a TSAFF member and small business owner, for being one of the first businesses to advertise with us. Please take a minute to look at his products at kewellwerk-designs.com. Having ordered from him, I can vouch that his products are excellent. As for advertising in the newsletter, please contact me if you or a referral business owner would like to reach up to 18,000 Texas firefighters in 190 communities.

Finally, I want to take a moment of personal privilege. For almost four years, I have been your secretary-treasurer and it has been an incredible honor. I remain excited about the recent progress of TSAFF and am confident about the direction in which our TSAFF is headed. Since I was first elected, we have instituted a more convenient auto-pay system for dues, implemented a secretary-treasurer training program that has benefitted Texas



Brandon Day
Secretary/Treasurer and
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Locals but also has been shared with or adopted in Oklahoma and Louisiana, established a statewide charitable foundation, expanded the educational opportunities at our annual service training program, and increased our EDF funding to be there in your Local's time of need. All of this while still delivering the level of service our members expect. But we are not done. We are on our way to having the best state organization in the IAFF. Thank you for your support and your commitment to making TSAFF stronger than ever.

Early in May, I attended my first meeting as secretary-treasurer of the Federation of State and Provincial Professional Fire Fighters (FSP-PPF). FSP-PPF members exchange information on legislative, political action and current issues affecting IAFF fire fighters. We're building stronger relationships and coordination between state and provincial associations. Our meeting in Oklahoma City was encouraging. I'm sharing the best Texas fire fighter ideas with others around the nation, and learning from them as well. Thanks to FSP-PPF Chair Pete Carozza, of Connecticut, and my secretary-treasurer predecessor, Tom Roate, of Illinois, for their support in the transition.



↑ A debriefing during the first deployment of the TSAFF peer support team in Beaumont.

TSAFF Peer Support Program Is Making a Difference

Statewide network now has 473 firefighters trained to help



Every Texas fire fighter or paramedic knows stress is just part of the job. But when it threatens our physical or emotional health, our marriages, our financial stability, or leads us to abuse alcohol or drugs, we now have better options for getting help.

Six months after TSAFF launched a new peer support program, 473 IAFF- or TSAFF-trained fire fighters with 16 team leaders are available to provide Texas fire fighters a wide range of support – from confidential advice from a fire fighter who faced a similar challenge to referrals to medical, financial or spiritual guidance.

TSAFF Chaplain Chris Hale, who's leading the state association peer support program, said, "When 'peer support' comes up, we often think of major crises such as line-of-duty deaths and injuries and traumatic fire and EMS scenes. But we now know the stress of our profession creates all kinds of issues. Some are life-and-death issues. Many others are not."

TSAFF peer support team members have been trained in therapeutic communication, crisis intervention, and community resource networking. They can provide assistance to both active and retired firefighters who are experiencing behavioral health or addiction issues. Peer support team members also act as bridges to outside resources.

TSAFF Peer Support District Lead Contact List

Suzy Bird Gulliver, Ph.D.

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TSAFF Peer Support Program

(continued)

The TSAFF program is aligned with the IAFF's program. Hale credits the contributions of Dr. Suzy Gulliver, an expert in trauma- and stress-related conditions who is the founding director and chief of the Warriors Research Institute at Scott & White Healthcare in Waco.

"Dr. Gulliver understands fire fighters and military personnel," Hale said. "Our members trust and rely on her. She and the IAFF are important partners for the TSAFF program."

Hale said research shows that fire service personnel who balance physical, behavioral, and emotional fitness have better quality of life, whether one is looking at adjustment to becoming a fire fighter, ratings of career satisfaction, family well-being, or adjustment to retirement.

TSAFF President John Riddle said, "TSAFF represents 18,000 fire fighters in 190 communities. We now can get help to every one of them. If a sister fire fighter wants to talk with an experienced sister in another city, we can make that happen. If a brother fire fighter is retiring, we can put him in touch with someone who understands that situation. Our program is new, but it has great potential."

Hale said, "When it comes to issues such as post-traumatic stress and other health challenges in the fire service, it's OK to admit that we're not OK. That understanding is the first step toward healing. I believe that a friendly, confidential peer support friend can save a fire fighter's life. I've witnessed it."

TSAFF recently provided peer support for Beaumont L-399 and a member in extreme distress who was missing, but later found safe and hospitalized. The peer support team reached 150 fire and EMS personnel at 12 fire stations over three days and three shifts. Riddle and TSAFF Secretary-Treasurer Brandon Day observed the peer support team's work and participated in debriefings.

Beaumont L-399 President Jeff Nesom said, "The TSAFF support exceeded our expectations. We addressed the urgent situation that week, but it brought more awareness of our members of our commitment to help them in tough times. It gave us momentum for

building our own peer support team."

Beaumont's team, which now includes 17 trained fire and EMS members, has supported members with issues of post-traumatic stress, substance abuse and family crises, Nesom said.

Hale said one priority of the TSAFF program is to match fire fighters in need with brother and sister fire fighters with similar experiences.

"Like many fire fighters, my faith is a powerful force in my life," Hale said. "But I appreciate that there are other perspectives and needs. Our goal with the TSAFF peer support program is to provide members with the help they want or need. They may need a doctor or counselor. They may need financial advice. Or they may just need a fire fighter friend to hear

them out and sort through some problems."

According to Hale, the common behavioral health threats fire fighters faces are post-traumatic stress, burnout, substance abuse, anger-management and depression "Substance abuse is a well-known issue for firefighters now, but other challenges like burnout and anxiety are increasingly common too," he said. "Anger and cynicism toward our employers and the public we serve are symptoms. So are detachment, short-fuse anger and other reactions."

Riddle added, "We want TSAFF members to always know that they have support and friends in their times of need. Please pick up the phone and reach out. With our peer support team, help is nearby."

TSAFF Peer Support District Lead Contact List

(continued)

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The TSAFF is pleased to announce the 47th Biennial Convention hosted by Garland Fire Fighters Association L-1293 and Rockwall Fire Fighters Association L-5057.

Convention will be held July 12-16 in Rockwall, Texas at the Hilton Dallas Rockwall Lakefront Hotel. Registration is open now at TSAFF.org.

Don't miss this important event as we set the direction of your state association for the next two years.

Important pre-convention dates and deadlines include:

- **May 28** – Last day to submit timely convention resolutions to the TSAFF Secretary-Treasurer. After this date, two-thirds of the assembled convention delegates must approve proposed resolution(s).
- **July 2** – Convention credentials must be received on or before this date by the TSAFF office to receive resolutions to be addressed at convention.

For more information on the convention, including registration, convention business, events and rules, please go to TSAFF.org.



Convention Constitution and By-Laws Information

Article VII Convention

Section 1. This Association shall assemble in Convention every two (2) years, on the odd numbered years, in a city selected by convention delegates. Should there not be a bid submitted, the executive board shall elect the host city.

Section 2. Representation in Convention shall be as follows: 1 to 25 members 1 delegate; at 26 members 2 delegates; at 101 members 3 delegates; and one (1) additional delegate for each full 200 members thereafter. In calculating representation and voting, the

average number of members paid on with the last twelve months of per capita received by the Secretary/Treasurer on the 1st day of April of the odd years shall determine the official membership of each Local. Locals in membership less than twelve (12) months shall have their representation calculated over average for months of membership on April first (1st) of the odd years.

Section 3. Any Local to be entitled to representation in convention must have their per capita paid up to one month previous to convention.

Section 4. A delegate must be a member in good standing in the local which he or she represents and must be present in order to cast his or her vote unless otherwise provided for in this document.

Section 5. IAFF Officers, IAFF Officers Emeritus, IAFF Staff Representative for Life, Louis Hebert, TSAFF Chaplain Emeritus Denny Burris, TSAFF Officers and Trustees Emeritus shall have delegate status provided that he or she is a member in good standing or retired as a member in good standing of a TSAFF affiliated Local. The TSAFF and IAFF Officer

Convention Constitution

(continued)

Emeritus and the IAFF Officers will not vote in TSAFF Officer Elections or carry resolutions to convention.

Section 6. The Texas Retired Fire Fighters Association (TRFFA) shall be granted two (2) Delegate At-Large delegates to the TSAFF Convention. The Delegates At-Large will be the TRFFA President and the TRFFA Secretary-Treasurer, or their designee. The Delegates At-Large will have speaking and voting privileges on all resolutions or motions, with the exception of the election of officers and convention site. The registration fee for Delegates At-Large of the TRFFA be waived by the TSAFF. Other expenses of these delegates would be paid by the TRFFA.

Section 7. Questions shall be decided in accordance with the parliamentary provisions set forth in Atwood's Rules for Meeting to the extent that such rules are not superseded by the expressed provisions of this Constitution and By-Laws. Roll call voting shall be made when twenty percent (20%) of the Locals are present and voting for such roll call. Proxy voting is allowed as provided for in the By-Laws.

Section 8. Timely resolutions must be submitted forty five (45) days prior to convention. Any resolution entered later shall be accepted only by two thirds (2/3) vote of the delegates assembled. Each delegate shall be furnished a copy of all resolutions at time of registration. All timely resolutions shall be mailed to delegates fifteen (15) days prior to convention.

Section 9. The Secretary/Treasurer shall assess a cost factor on each resolution coming before the convention or being put up for referendum. The adoption of any resolution shall automatically alter the per capita in accordance with the assessment of the Secretary/Treasurer.

Section 10. A mileage allowance based on state executive board travel expense and four (4) nights single room rate at the convention hotel shall be allowed to the Local for one delegate from any Local whose membership is one hundred (100) or less, re-affiliated locals organized by the TSAFF may have delegates seated at convention, but must be members of the

TSAFF for twelve (12) months prior to convention to receive convention allowances.

Section 11. Each delegate shall be required to register with the Sergeant at Arms at each session.

Section 12. Alternate delegates may be seated in the absence of regular delegates upon presentation of proper credentials.

Section 13. TSAFF Officers Emeritus will be reimbursed for mileage, hotel single room rate for four (4) nights, and meals for five (5) days or days of actual attendance. This reimbursement will be at the State Executive Board expense rate.

Second (2nd) By-Law - Procedure for Proxy Representation

Section 1. Only locals with 25 members or less who do not send a delegate to convention may grant its proxy to another local provided the following conditions are observed:

(a) The Local granting a proxy and the Local Union accepting the Proxy must both be member Locals of the TSAFF.

(b) A proxy must be authorized by a majority of the votes cast by secret ballot vote of the members in good standing of the Local Union granting the proxy upon at least fifteen (15) days notice of such vote.

(c) No Local Union may, in addition to its own delegates representation, accept proxies to represent membership in excess of 100.

Third (3rd) By-Law - Procedure for Voting at Convention

Section 1. The voting on issues at convention shall be by each delegate and officer having one vote.

Section 2. The voting on President and first delegate, Secretary/Treasurer and second delegate, and on convention city and the nominee for Texas AFLCIO Vice President shall be by each officer and delegate having one vote, one vote for each proxy being carried, and each Local being allowed to vote one vote

for each delegate to which it was entitled but did not send to convention.

Section 3. The vote on the election of a Vice President and Trustee for each district shall be the same as in Section 2 except that State Association officers shall not vote in the Vice President election and all delegates and



2021 TSAFF Convention Agenda

Saturday, July 10:

- 9 a.m. - TSAFF Executive Board Meeting

Sunday, July 11:

- 1-5 p.m. - Registration
- Networking Opportunities / Group Activities

Monday July 12:

- 1-5 p.m. - Registration
- 7-8 a.m. - Registration
- 9 a.m. - Opening Ceremony
- 1 p.m. - Committee Meetings
- 6 p.m. - Welcome Reception

Tuesday, July 13:

- 9 a.m. - Committee Meetings
- 1 p.m. - General Session

Wednesday, July 14:

- 9 a.m. - General Session
- 5:30 p.m. - TAFPAC Reception

Thursday, July 15:

- 9 a.m. - General Session
- 6 p.m. - President's Dinner

Friday, July 16:

- 9 a.m. - General Session (if needed)

Convention Constitution

(continued)

proxy votes must be from Locals within the respective districts.

Section 4. Under roll call voting, each Local Union is entitled to one vote for each member of the Local Union. Local Unions entitled to more than one delegate may send less than their authorized number and on roll call votes and election of officers the Chairman of the delegation may cast the entire vote to which the Local is entitled.

Section 5. A majority of all valid votes cast shall be necessary for election. If more than three candidates are nominated for the same office or for convention city, none of which receives a majority of the votes on the first ballot, all candidates or cities other than the three leading candidates shall be dropped and the balloting shall continue, dropping the candidate with the least number of votes, until one candidate or city receives a majority.

Section 6. In the event there is a tie vote for election of officers or convention city, there shall be conducted three votes in an effort to break the tie. If a tie still exists, then a roll call vote as in section 4 shall be issued to break the tie. The voting then returns to the delegate voting system prescribed in Section 2 and/or 4 above until a candidate or city receives a majority.

Section 7. Proxy shall be permitted only in a call of the roll vote and in the election of officers and shall be cast by the Chairman of the carrying Local's delegation.

Section 8. No officer shall have more than one vote in convention and officers shall not be permitted to vote by proxy nor shall any officer be allowed to vote in Vice Presidential or Trustee elections.

Section 9. Election problems not defined herein shall be decided in a manner prescribed by majority vote of the election committee.

Convention Rules

- Parliamentary questions shall be decided in accordance with the provisions set forth in Roberts Rules for Meetings

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to the extent that such rules are not superseded by the expressed provisions of the Constitution and By-Laws except that a call of the roll shall be made when twenty percent (20%) of the locals are present and voting for such roll call.

- All resolutions will be assigned to a committee for study and recommendation except for floor resolutions made after 12:00 p.m. noon, Thursday, which shall require unanimous consent for consideration and 4/5th majority vote for adoption.
- Nominations and elections for all offices and convention city will be conducted by the Elections Committee. Nominations speeches will be held to a maximum of two (2) minutes. Second speeches will be limited to one (1) minute and only one second will be recognized. Each nominee or convention city representative will be allowed three (3) minutes for nomination acceptance remarks.
- Convention business hours will be from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Monday and

Tuesday afternoon will be set aside for committee meetings. All committee amendments or substitutes will be reduced to writing before Convention consideration.

- Any and all distributions of materials on the convention floor will only be distributed by staff or sergeant-at-arms during convention hours.
- Each elected delegate and alternate delegate shall register with the credentials committee not later than 5:00 P.M. on the first day of the convention.
- Delegates and alternates who arrive after 5 o'clock p.m. of the first day of the convention may be seated if approved by a three-quarter (3/4) majority vote of the convention delegates.
- Delegates must be seated by close of business on Wednesday in order to vote Thursday morning.
- Locals under 100 must be present for business all 4 days in order to qualify for reimbursement.



↑ Lubbock L-972 members welcome Matt Dawson during a visit to the fire station.

Lubbock L-972 Keeps the Faith for Matt Dawson

Lubbock firefighter Matt Dawson's extraordinary recovery continues with his L-972 family by his side.

On January 11, 2020, Matt was struck by a vehicle while responding at the icy scene of a car accident. He suffered a traumatic brain injury, along with multiple broken bones. He has worked tirelessly in his rehabilitation. Lubbock fire fighters have stayed with him through every hospitalization in Lubbock and in Denver.

Lubbock L-972 President Joseph Wallace said, "The Lubbock community has stepped up for Matt as well. It's been amazing."

Wallace said L-972 members and their families have helped provide the Dawson family with meals, a meat freezer, yard work, vehicle repairs and maintenance, and fundraisers.

The Local also encouraged the Lubbock Home Builders Association to modify Matt's home for more comfort and convenience, and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Hero Homes also is building the Dawsons a new home.

"From Matt's hospitalizations in Lubbock and Colorado to many other moments, fire fighters have tried to be there for Matt and his family," Wallace said. "We know he would do the

same for us. The best news is, he's continuing to recover and make a new life."

Matt's wife, Chanda, established a Facebook page that chronicles Matt's recovery – from enjoying visits with his fire fighter brothers to physical, occupational and speech therapies and resuming daily activities such as grilling, running the vacuum cleaner and attending their daughter's activities. The Facebook page is at @DawsonStrong972.

The Dawsons also have become advocates of drivers slowing down and moving away from accidents and other roadside incidents. "We can't get that word out enough to remember to slow down and move over," Matt recently said in a Lubbock TV news interview.

Matt's other passion is to rebuild himself and get back to the fire station: "I'm going to come back 100 percent back to them," he said. "It's just going to take some time."

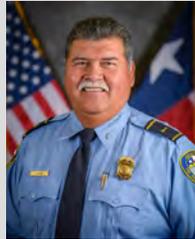
Chanda periodically posts updates about Matt's progress. "Life may have thrown us a curve ball," she recently wrote on the DawsonStrong Facebook page, "but I'd say we have knocked it out of the park! We are figuring this new life out step by step... He never ceases to amaze me."



↑ Matt and Chanda Dawson urge vehicle drivers to slow down and move away from accidents and roadside incidents.



TSAFF Honors COVID-19 LODDs



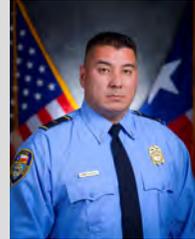
Leroy Lucio
Houston L-341
July 20, 2020



Gerardo Pacheco
Houston L-341
August 3, 2020



Jesus "Jesse" De La Rosa
Weslaco L-3207
August 8, 2020



Tommy Searcy
Houston L-341
September 8, 2020



Randy Robinson
Fort Worth L-440
December 17, 2020



Erik Segura
Laredo L-872
January 26, 2021

Governor Appoints Glynn to TCFP



↑ TSAFF Trustee Michael Glynn

Texas Governor Greg Abbott appointed TSAFF Trustee Michael Glynn to the Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP).

Glynn, of Roanoke, is president of the Fort Worth Professional Firefighters, L-440. He is a fire captain for the Fort Worth Fire Department and an adjunct instructor at Tarrant County College.

Glynn is a service representative and labor education instructor for IAFF. He received an Associate of Applied Science in Fire Science from San Antonio College and a Bachelor of Business Administration from Texas A&M University.

Through its 13-member board appointed by the governor, the TCFP develops and enforces statewide fire service standards and provides education and assistance to the industry.

Glynn's term will expire on February 1, 2027.

"I look forward to serving the TCFP," Glynn said. "I strongly support its mission to aid in the protection of lives and property of Texas citizens through the development and enforcement of fire service professional standards and education. Helping keep Texas firefighters and other fire protection personnel safe begins with the important work of the TCFP in safety, training, and credentialing. I'm grateful for Governor Abbott's confidence in me."

TSAFF President John Riddle said, "All of us at TSAFF thank the governor for this appointment and we congratulate Michael. Our 18,000 members in 190 Texas communities will have a strong advocate for fire service standards in Michael. His experience and commitment to Texas firefighters is clear."

Day Elected as Secretary-Treasurer of FSPFFF



↑ Brandon Day

T SAFF Secretary-Treasurer Brandon Day, of Garland L-1293, was elected to a two-year term as secretary-treasurer of the Federation of State and Provincial Professional Fire Fighters (FSPFFF).

The FSPFFF meets each spring and fall to exchange information regarding legislative, political action and current issues affecting members across the United States and Canada and to provide for stronger relationships and coordination between state and provincial associations.

As TSAFF secretary-treasurer, Day implemented ACH for affiliate locals and established a training program for union secretary-treasurers. He also coordinates the state association's live and online training and workshop program.

Day also established the TSAFF Charitable Foundation and has helped rapidly grow the state association's political action committee. As a member of the IAFF Disaster Relief Go Team, he responded to Hurricanes Harvey and Laura. He also completed the IAFF Political Training Academy.



PFLUGERVILLE L-4137 WINS REFERENDUM

After an eight-year effort building community support, Pflugerville L-4137 fire fighters won their referendum approving the creation of Travis County Emergency Services District 17 to provide ambulance and advanced EMS services. Pflugerville L-4137 President Joshua Stubblefield said, "The overwhelming response of voters to approve the district reflects the will of the community. We want to thank the 3,800 voters who signed the petition, all of those who voted for the district, and the many who supported the effort. You had our backs and we thank you. We look forward to continuing to provide the top-rated fire and EMS services Travis County ESD 2 Pflugerville Fire Department is known for."

ELECT **BEAU SIMPSON**



DISTRICT 2 VICE PRES.

BEAU KNOWS. TSAFF



TSAFF Online Workshops Rate Well in Member Survey

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced TSAFF, like many organizations, to go to online meetings and training, TSAFF put more than a dozen training and workshop sessions online.

As of early May, more than 200 Texas firefighter leaders from 92 Locals will have attended the online sessions, which covered workers' comp developments, secretary-treasurer training, building local political programs, a four-week service training session, and communications topics.

As the 2021-22 training program is planned, TSAFF executive board and staff has

sought participant input and constructive criticism. While most firefighters leaders prefer resumption of in-person training and workshops, the consensus of those surveyed was that this year's offerings generally were good to excellent, and that some programs should continue to be offered online to save travel and lodging expenses for locals unable to send members.

The average workshop rating, on a scale of 1 (excellent) to 5 (poor), was 1.38.

More information about the survey results and upcoming training/workshop events will be available at or before the TSAFF convention.



Calendar of Upcoming Events

Dates of events are subject to change.

- **TSAFF Executive Board Meeting**
*Hilton Dallas/Rockwall Lakefront
Rockwall/Garland, TX
July 10, 2021, 9 a.m.*
- **TSAFF 47th Biennial Convention**
*Hilton Dallas/Rockwall Lakefront
Rockwall/Garland, TX
July 12-16, 2021*
- **IAFF Redmond Health and Safety Symposium/Barbera EMS Conference**
*New York, NY
Sept. 6-10, 2021*
- **IAFF Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial**
*Colorado Springs, CO
Sept. 18, 2021*
- **TSAFF Executive Board Meeting**
*Pflugerville, TX
Oct. 18, 2021, 9 a.m.*
- **TSAFF Service Training**
*Pflugerville, TX
Oct. 18-22, 2021
Details to be announced soon.*
- **TSAFF Political Training**
*Pflugerville, TX
Oct. 18-22, 2021
Details to be announced soon.*
- **TSAFF Communications Workshop**
Details to be announced soon.

YOUR VOTE MATTERS.



**Re-elect
Pedro "Pete" Martinez
For 5th District VP**

*Continuing to pave the way for
future generations of firefighters.*



pmartinez@tsaff.org

Texas Firefighters Deliver Gear for Firefighters in Mexico

Garland, Houston and Laredo firefighters donated equipment

A truckload of donated firefighter bunker coats and pants, boots, helmets and pulse oximeters sent by TSAFF to Mexico was distributed to 15 municipalities in the Lake Chapala area of Mexico, near Guadalajara.

The project was coordinated through Lakeside Assistance Group, a nonprofit organization whose leadership includes retired Canadian, U.S. and Mexican firefighters.

The donations were provided by the Garland Fire Fighters Association L-1293, the Houston Professional Fire Fighters Association L-341, and the Laredo Fire Fighters L-872. The gear was trucked to Laredo from Austin, and then to Ajijic, Mexico.

TSAFF President John Riddle said, "Texas firefighters are proud to help our brothers and sisters in Mexico. Firefighters from Garland, Houston and Laredo stepped up to help. We hope to make more donations in the future. There's so much potential to redirect decommissioned firefighter equipment from Texas to Mexico – because of our proximity and the strong work of the Lakeside Assistance Group. They understand the fire service and how to make the most of the donated gear. That was important to us. It's a strong organization."

Lakeside Assistance Group President John Kelly, whose charity has imported millions of dollars of fire equipment into Mexico from Canada and the U.S., said, "Firefighters in Canada and the U.S. know they can trust us to put these donated resources to good use. We also have a strong record on the customs and regulatory issues. Firefighters in the communities around Lake Chapala do great work – and they appreciate the donations that help further strengthen their fire departments. We've got good momentum, but there's always more work we can do. We've got dozens of fire stations around the lake with needs."

Lake Chapala is surrounded by towns including Chapala, Ajijic, San Antonio



Tlayacapan, San Juan Tecomatlan, Jocotepec, San Juan Cosala, San Luis Soyatlán, Mezcala de la Asunción, Tizapan El Alto, La Palma, Michoacán and Ocotlán. Thousands of Canadian and U.S. retirees also reside in the area.

Kelly said the COVID-19 pandemic has caused local shortages of some medical equipment, including pulse oximeters, which measure oxygen levels in blood. The TSAFF shipment included 100 new pulse oximeters from Houston firefighters. "The needs of our

firefighters change as our resources ebb and flow," he added, "but our partnerships with organizations like TSAFF and with fire departments throughout Canada and the U.S. have put us on the right track. There's so much potential and generosity in the fire service. We all share the same goal: to have the best fire service possible in our communities."

Laredo L-872 helped facilitate the border crossing of a truckload of donated gear for fire stations in the Lake Chapala area.





↑ TSAFF President Emeritus Guy Turner with Mission L-3609 firefighters at the 2015 state association convention.

TSAFF President Emeritus Guy Turner Remembered

TSAFF President Emeritus Guy Turner, who passed away due to COVID-19 complications, was memorialized on May 15 in Abilene.

The Turner family's obituary, as published in the Abilene Reporter-News, follows:

Guy was born in Hamlin, TX on June 4, 1960 to Charlie F. Turner and Martha Gage Turner. He attended Hamlin School until graduation in 1978. Guy attended Texas Tech University and Cisco College.

On January 25, 1983 he started on the Abilene Fire Department and retired as a lieutenant May 12, 2010. Guy served with the Abilene Fire Department for over 27 years. He held the title of President Emeritus at Texas State Association of Fire Fighters (TSAFF). He proudly represented and worked hard for Texas

fire fighters on the TSAFF Board of Directors for 18 years. He was president of the TSAFF for the last 12 years of his board affiliation.

TSAFF is part of the International Association of Fire Fighters, Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA's) largest supporter for 65 years. Without Guy's support and encouragement, the Texas Sean McKinnis Charitable Solicitation Law, which protects Texas Fire Fighters' right to collect on the streets during their annual "Fill the Boot" campaign (which has been replicated in at least nine others states), would never have been possible. His actions protected the millions of dollars that are collected in their boots by Fire Fighters across the country for MDA's camps, patient services and research.

Guy is survived by his wife Jennifer; son

Rob Hudman and wife Lindy of Albany; son Josh Hudman and wife Taylor of Lubbock; daughter Jacie Rehm and husband Cody of Goldthwaite; and two grandchildren, Kasen and Kameryn of Albany; his uncle Blanton Gage of Talco; his aunt Cathy Warick and her husband Mervin of Clyde; his aunt Grace Oliver of Abilene; his brother in law Clint Wheat of Hamlin; his nephew Chance Brown; his great nephew Austin; and numerous cousins.

Guy is preceded in death by his parents, Charlie and Martha; and his sister, Sharla Wheat.

The family requests, in lieu of flowers, that donations be sent to: Muscular Dystrophy Association MDA-WEB, P.O Box 97075, Washington, DC 20090-7075.

District 1 Looking Ahead to a Great TSAFF Convention

A 'new normal' in 2020 and 2021

*Vice President
Bobby Whiteley*

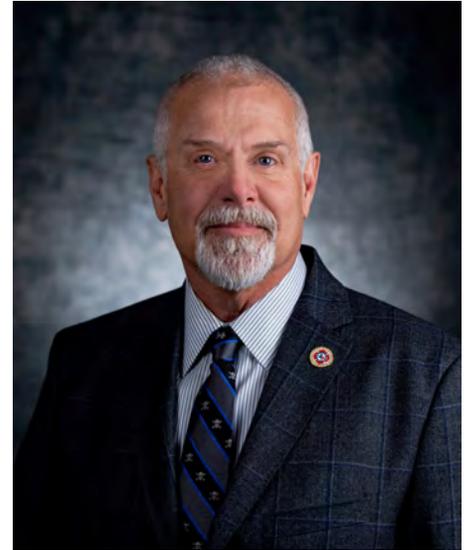
I hope this finds you well as we are well into the new year. It seems the only "constant" in our lives is change, and unbelievable change seems to be happening. New duties for Texas fire fighters daily, new elected officials, new ways to conduct meetings, in some locals newly elected officers. There is little time for rest.

I look forward to having our convention in July in normal fashion, in person. The thought process is our members will have had vaccines and the numbers of positive cases will be dropping drastically, according to the experts. The news so far is good in that respect. This could very well be the most attended convention we have ever had based on our members are ready to travel and break the cabin fever, so to speak. I have no doubt that Rockwall and Garland will provide a great experience.

As you know, the legislative session is well underway, and we learned how to navigate a "new normal" at the state capital. It has been more challenging than usual, but we learned the ropes and got our jobs done. Stay diligent and interact with your local elected officials as that is how the political process begins.

There is so much more to report on for the 1st District and what is happening in each Local so be looking for emails from me as we get closer to convention time. If anyone needs anything from me, please give me a shout. I'm not hard to find.

One last note. The TSAFF and IAFF work very closely to accomplish the goals of benefits and safety for our members and our communities. Last year was very tumultuous year for the IAFF, but we will overcome any hurdles this has caused by working together for



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our members in Texas. Complaining from the cheap seats doesn't solve anything. Everyone has a voice, get involved in your Local if you think a new direction is needed. I always sign out with "Strength in Brotherhood." It's not just a catchy phrase. Think about it.



Support the TSAFF Charitable Foundation

The TSAFF Charitable Foundation, in partnership with the 6th Street Winery, is offering a wine gift box set for \$85. Each set includes TSAFF-branded cabernet sauvignon and chardonnay. The Foundation will receive \$30 from each order.

Share a bottle with family and friends - and know that sales of this wine will benefit our 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.



Thanks for your support of
6th Street Winery and Texas firefighters.

The gift box set can be ordered online here:
<https://sixthstreetwinery.com/tsaff>

District 2 The Toll of Occupational Cancer

Thanks for opportunity to serve

*Vice President
Steve Dorris*

We welcomed in the New Year with the collective hope that 2020 and COVID would soon be a thing of the past. Unfortunately, we continue to deal with COVID and all that it entails, but in typical firefighter fashion, we have figured out how to adapt, overcome and continue to fulfill the mission.

Across the district, locals have adjusted how they conduct their union's business, how they serve their communities and how they continue to protect and promote the rights, wages and working conditions of their members. Your TSAFF has done the same. With Zoom meetings being the norm, we have used this platform to increase the online training opportunities offered to our members as well as continuing our political, legislative, communications and service programs.

Occupational cancer continues to extract a heavy toll on our members

Aside from the multiple workers comp cancer claims filed across the TSAFF, in the past six months we have suffered four cancer related LODDs in the 2nd District alone. Improving how we prevent our members from contracting this terrible disease to overhauling how workers comp treats cancer claims continues to be a major focus of your TSAFF.

Political action pays off for L-4400

On a positive note, I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize the strong work of Glenn Heights L-4400. President Nick Williams and

his executive board, without the benefits and protections of Civil Service or a contract, have built a relationship of respect, trust and understanding with city leadership that has allowed them to continue to improve the health and safety, retirement, benefits and pay for their members. Over the last several years L-4400 has successfully:

- Helped elect a majority of pro public safety council members and Mayor
- Established an annual in-depth cancer and heart disease screening paid for by the city
- Secured two sets of bunker gear for all members
- Restored TMRS retirement from 1:1 back to 2:1
- Decreased retirement years from 25 to 20
- Increased vacation rollover from 160 hours to 240 hours
- Established a competitive step pay plan with automatic adjustments and adoption every 2-3 years
- Secured hazard pay for their members during the COVID pandemic

Welcome new presidents

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome and congratulate the following new presidents within the district:

- Mike Hundley - Anna L-5287
- Jason Kogler - Carrollton L-2128
- Joel Duraso - Gladewater L-5210
- Nick Dunn - Mt. Pleasant L-5069
- Patrick Mayo - Tyler L-883

In closing, this will be my final contribution to the TSAFF newsletter as your District Vice



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“It has been my honor and great privilege to serve as the 2nd District Vice President”

President. I have recently taken a full-time position that unfortunately will not allow me the flexibility to continue my service as the 2nd District Vice President once COVID restraints are no longer in place. I will not be seeking re-election at this year's TSAFF convention and have tendered my letter of resignation to President Riddle, effective Monday, May 31, 2021. Until that time, I will continue to represent and serve the 2nd District and all TSAFF firefighters.

It has been my honor and great privilege to serve as the 2nd District Vice President and to work alongside each of you in advancing the cause of Texas firefighters. Thank you for all you do on behalf of your local as well as all Texas firefighters and know that it is with deep regret that I must vacate my office.

District 3 Thankful for Fire Fighters Throughout District

Mourning loss of Laredo brother Erik Segura

*Vice President
Aidan Alvarado*

Like everyone, I was happy to see 2020 in the rearview mirror and get into 2021. To close out the year I was able to make visits in the district whether it was in Laredo, Corpus Christi L-936, McAllen L-2602, Kerrville L-3230, or Schertz L-4083 to help in the efforts of making the leaders of the 3rd TSAFF District successful in representing their Local members.

Some of the things we have worked on are meeting with our state reps and senators in our district to help the TSAFF legislative agenda in Austin for the 87th Legislature. I would like to thank the members that attended these meetings as we look to see if our efforts in meeting these legislators improve the way of life for firefighters in Texas.

I would also like to recognize the firefighters of Laredo L-872 in assisting in the TSAFF bunker gear donation program for firefighters in the Ajijic/Chapala areas of Mexico. The program helped in providing hundreds of pieces of bunker gear, helmets, and medical equipment to our brothers and sisters in Mexico. Thank you for your efforts along with Locals from Garland L-1293 and Houston L-341 who participated to make this a successful event.

I would also like to recognize Locals from Mission L-3609 and McAllen L-2602 who received training to help their cities administer COVID-19 vaccines in their respected cities in the hopes of lowering the infection rates in their areas. As many of you know, the 3rd District has been hit with high infection rates for the last couple of months. May their efforts and the efforts of all our members who are on the frontline make a difference in their communities and assist in controlling the infection rates in the region.

One of our brothers, Captain Erik Segura

from Laredo L-872, passed away recently from complications of COVID-19. Captain Segura was well loved by his brothers and sisters in Laredo and will be greatly missed. Thank you to everyone who reached out with your kind words. Please keep his family in your prayers in this difficult time.

As we work through 2021, we are continuing to offer educational classes online and I encourage members to log into the website TSAFF.org to register for the classes they think will be beneficial to provide service to their local. I am always available if any of you have any questions and I am wishing you all a safe and happy rest of 2021.

From my Facebook account... on the memory of waiting four years ago for the press conference for House Bill 1983, which would provide fire fighters and police officers help if they have faced a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress



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while protecting their respectful communities: "4 years ago the Bill was introduced. We worked that session and successfully pass it as State Law. All to better the profession of a first responder. Nothing can describe the tragedy and pain we see over a career but I am happy to know that the work I put in and the team I was on in Austin allowed for help to be there when my brothers and sisters need it."

↓ *On International Firefighters Day 2021, I joined Mission L-3609's Mike Silva and Leroy Garcia, and Rep. Terry Canales to celebrate the House passage of HB 1973, the firefighter "bill of rights."*



District 4 Welcome to New District 4 Locals

Gearing up for referendums

*Vice President
Mark Medrano*

We are still under social distancing rules but engaging as much as possible through Zoom. I have been having a monthly District Zoom meeting to keep you in the loop. We have been successful with participation from District 4 officers.

Welcome to our new Locals: Atascocita Harris County Emergency Service District 46, Williamson County Emergency Service District 7, Cypress Creek Fire Department and Mexia Fire department.

The Legislative session is well underway, and we are busy at the Capitol. The Speaker of the House is Representative Dade Phelan from District 4 representing the Beaumont area. We will keep you posted on our progress.

COVID-19 is still here and looks like it will

be here for a while. We are still having issues throughout the state with the way it is handled. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Service Director Rafael Torres is very busy assisting Locals with various needs, which vary from grievances to indefinite suspensions to Contract Negotiations. Let me know if you have any issues, I may be able to help you and keep some things off Rafael's shoulders.

Groves and Port Neches are gearing up for a Collective Bargaining referendum with binding arbitration in November. Missouri City won a Civil Service referendum this past November which will begin this October. Congratulations to Missouri City on their win! Political Director Joe Tellez is talking with Groves and Port Neches in preparation for their upcoming election.



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We are beginning to travel a little but practicing social distancing and mask wearing in public. If you would like for me to come talk to your members, don't hesitate to call me. I am looking forward to the time when we can get together again! Be safe out there!

Like a growing number of TSAFF locals, Lake Travis L-4117 formed a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization to assist its members in need. The Local's charity made grants to members affected by the winter storm event. The Local's fundraising efforts include sales of branded coffee.



**SUPPORT YOUR
LTFIREFIIGHTERS**



WITH EVERY CUP



Conroe L-2731 Honored Radford

As they mourned the COVID-19-related loss of retired fire fighter Neal Radford, members of Conroe L-2731 credited his dedication to the fire department and the Local. TSAFF

President John Riddle, who retired from the Conroe fire department, and L-2731 President Lloyd Sandefer cited Radford's safety advocacy and his service as a Local vice president. Sandefer said, "He was crucial in laying the groundwork to what we are today and the successes we have today. He cared about the health and safety of every single firefighter on the line." Radford passed away on April 29 after a long hospitalization/ He was 52.

District 5 Vaccination Efforts Continue in District 5

Keeping up the great work

Vice President

Pedro “Pete” Martinez

Vaccination efforts are in full force in the 5th District. Many of the local departments are putting together successful vaccination programs that are greatly benefitting our communities.

Denton: Denton County Public Health is coordinating vaccine efforts for the Denton area with a 16 lane drive thru site at Texas Motor Speedway. Firefighters from multiple departments (Lewisville, The Colony, Argyle, Fort Worth, Little Elm, Highland Village, Flower Mound, and Denton) are being utilized for check in, screening, and administering vaccines. 10,000 vaccines were administered on Day 1 and they are averaging 7,000 to 8,000 vaccines daily.

Arlington: The Arlington Fire Department in conjunction with the Tarrant County Health Department began their vaccination efforts in late December and are currently averaging approximately 2700 vaccines per day. They are utilizing their own Firefighters as well as

Mansfield and Pantego at the ESport Convention Center. February 22nd FEMA will begin coordinating vaccine efforts at the AT&T Cowboys Stadium in conjunction with Arlington’s efforts. Arlington FD is also considering a community outreach program that would benefit the high risk community by administering vaccinations in homes.

Hurst: The Hurst Fire Department is also coordinating with the Tarrant County Health Department to administer 2,500 to 2,900 vaccines per day at the Hurst Convention Center. They are coordinating efforts with Keller, Haltom City, Westlake, North Richland Hills, North Hills, Colleyville, Southlake, Trophy Club, Watauga, Grapevine, and Bedford Fire Departments.

Grand Prairie/Irving: Grand Prairie and Irving Fire Departments are participating in a joint effort to vaccinate approx. 2000 individuals per week at the Theater in Grand Prairie. This effort began 2 weeks ago and is ongoing



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Flower Mound: Flower Mound Fire Department was able to obtain 500 doses early on and vaccinate local first responders.

Cedar Hill: Chief Rodney Smith has been working with Dallas to coordinate vaccine efforts at Fair Park in Dallas.

Burleson: They are doing around 500 vaccinations a day with a goal of 1,000 per day as they continue with vaccinations. They are using Fort Worth fire fighters to help with vaccinations.

TSAFF and myself are extremely proud and grateful for the continued vaccine efforts in my District. Keep up the great work, brothers and sisters.

← Lewisville L-3606 deployed across the state to support the fight against COVID-19. Along with other Texas fire fighters, they provided vaccinations in many communities.



District 6 Houston Firefighters Win Landmark Ruling

City fails in attack on collective bargaining

Vice President

Patrick M. "Marty" Lancton

The Texas 14th Court of Appeals rejected Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner's attempt to have the voter-approved collective bargaining system for Houston firefighters declared unconstitutional.

In a 34-page opinion issued on May 6, the 14th Court affirmed a lower court ruling won by Houston firefighters. The appellate court opinion repeatedly dismissed the city's appellate arguments. The Turner Administration was ordered to pay the firefighters' costs incurred in the litigation.

For more than two years, the mayor has asked district and appellate courts to declare the firefighters' use of Texas Local Government Code Chapter 174 unconstitutional after publicly claiming he still wants to negotiate a new firefighter contract under the same system. No contract negotiations have occurred, and the mayor has not met with firefighter leaders since leaving negotiations in 2017.

"We are grateful for this ruling. It should be a signal for the mayor to end the vindictive, taxpayer-funded legal campaign against Houston firefighters and our families. This ruling provides the city with an opportunity to reverse course and resolve our disputes."

This landmark opinion proves the City of Houston was simply wrong in its attack on collective bargaining. This ruling should help other Texas firefighters and first responders that may face similar attacks. It's a good win for firefighters and public workers throughout Texas to have the appellate court uphold the constitutionality of collective bargaining.

Houston voters approved Chapter 174 collective bargaining for Houston firefighters in 2003. The law has governed wage rates for Texas public safety personnel for four decades.

Before 2017, the HPFFA had successfully negotiated several contracts with the city. Turner is the only Houston mayor to fail to reach a collectively bargained contract with firefighters. Texas labor leaders, including Texas AFL-CIO President Rick Levy, warned Turner of the "dangerous implications" of his position in the litigation.

Texas Supreme Court rules for fire fighters in reinstatement case

The Texas Supreme Court issued an order in February in favor of L-341 and our members reinstating them after being wrongfully terminated. This case finally disposed of the City of Houston's meritless taxpayer-funded



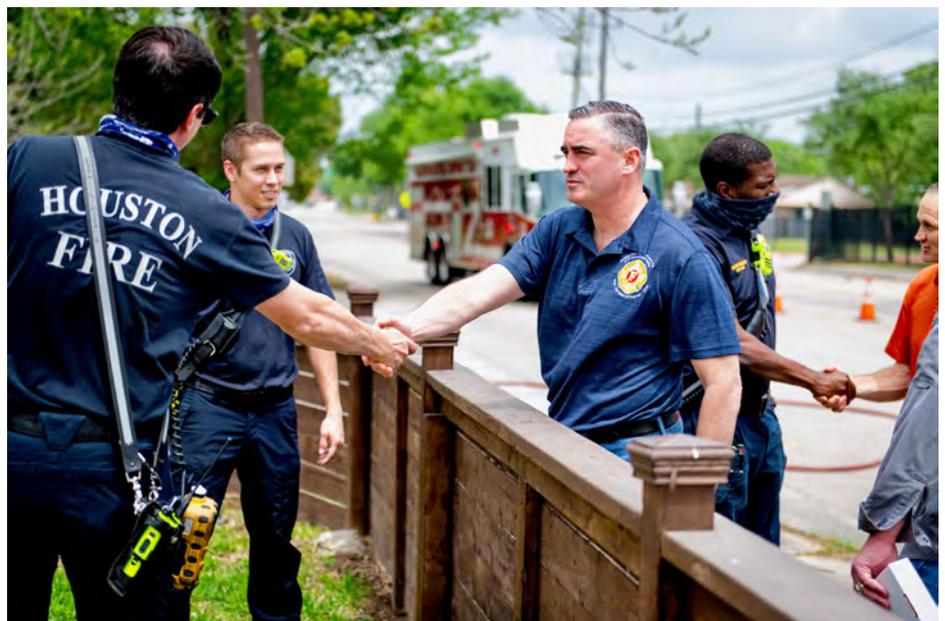
Patrick M. "Marty" Lancton
District 6 Vice President

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Houston, TX 77009
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legal fight over wrongful terminations of our members.

Our mission is to fight for what's right and that is what we did in this case. Through the hard work and determination of our grievance committee and legal team, we continue

↓ *Houston firefighters welcomed IAFF General President Ed Kelly and IAFF General Secretary-Treasurer Frank Lima to Houston early in April.*



District 6

(continued)

to defend the rights' of our members. I would like to take a moment and thank our grievance committee and legal counsel for the work they continue to do on behalf of our members. L-341 processes nearly 300 grievances and complaints a year.

Along with our efforts in the 6th District continue both locally and in Austin during the Legislative session, Houston fire fighters have partnered with local civic and business organizations from all political and ideological backgrounds to form the Houston Charter Amendment Petition Coalition (HCAP). HCAP is a bipartisan group collecting signatures to change the balance of power at Houston City Hall. We turned in the required number of signatures turned into the city secretary to have the referendum put to Houston voters. We look forward to working with and building strong coalitions through political action. If you would like to take a look at the initiative, please go to www.hcapinfo.com.

We are standing strong for today, tomorrow, and each other. God bless you sisters and brothers.



Re- Elect **BOBBY WHITELEY**

1st District V P at Texas State
Association of Fire Fighters

• Proudly Serving •

Abilene
Amarillo
Big Spring
Borger
Bowie
Brownwood
Del Rio

El Paso
Lubbock
Midland
Odessa
Pampa
Pantex
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San Angelo
Snyder
Stephenville
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Vernon
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2. Please like the TSAFF Facebook page and the TSAFF Twitter feed— @TSAFFNews — and encourage your family and friends to do so as well.

Thank you.

Legislative Report

A '52-Card-Pickup' Kind of Session

Thanks to TSAFF district legislative agents

Legislative Director
Glenn Deshields

The 87th Texas Legislative Session began extraordinarily slowly with COVID-19, then the historic winter storm hit, and it's been a politically chaotic, 52-card-pickup kind of a session ever since.

As this article was finished and the session neared an end, TSAFF had helped pass important COVID-19-related presumption, quarantine and Emergency Services District (ESD) bills, but several other previously promising bills were among hundreds stuck in inter-party fighting among legislative leaders.

Through it all, your TSAFF legislative team of myself, Johnny Villareal, Aidan Alvarado and your district legislative agents – Lloyd Sandefer, Jonathan Wilson, Tyler Houchin, Mike Jones, Brad McCutcheon, Mike Silva, and Jack Todd – have had hundreds of phone calls and meetings with legislators and staff.

Here's the overview of what's happened in session so far:

Senate Bill 22, which provides fire fighters and other first responders with a COVID-19 presumption, was passed. So was House Bill 2171/SB 786, legislation that allows Emergency Services Districts (ESDs) to be treated better and more like municipal fire departments.

HB 2171 extends healthcare to retirees of ESDs. Likely to be passed and awaiting Senate action is HB 2073, which confirms in statute that your fire department is responsible for any costs that are incurred when you are placed in quarantine if you have an on-duty exposure to a communicable disease such as COVID-19.

SB 709, the sunset bill for Texas Commission for Fire Protection (TCFP) has passed the House and Senate, and is awaiting Senate to concur in amendments and then to the cover.

We also helped kill 15 to 20 bad pieces of

legislation related to dues deduction, the Texas Commission for Fire Protection (TCFP), and civil service discipline and termination issues. In urging defeat of SB 897, TSAFF helped stop an attempt by a group of fire chiefs to weaken the commission and state regulations regarding prevention of occupational cancer and other issues.

Still looming and holding up progress in other areas is the passage of a state budget. Though through both houses, the budget bill is still in conference committee. A special session will happen in the fall as statewide redistricting has not yet occurred either.

Hundreds of bills – including many with near unanimous support in the House – have died, among them HB 1973, HB 2242 and HB 3120.

The Senate Committee on Local Government, chaired by Sen. Paul Bettencourt, refused to hear HB 1973, the so-called firefighter bill of rights related to disciplinary action. He cited "anti-union pressure" as the justification. He also refused to vote out HB 2242, a bill related to firefighter injury or illness leave of absence.

We were especially disappointed to see the senate fail to act on HB 3120, which was to provide catastrophically line-of-duty injured firefighters like Andy Allison of Lewisville L-3606 with lifetime income benefits under the workers' compensation system. This bill was stopped with hundreds of other bills due to in-fighting between the lieutenant governor, governor, and speaker of the house.

Binding arbitration did not pass for fire departments with collective bargaining, but we are much farther ahead than we were in previous sessions. This will be a priority next time.

The TSAFF leadership and I want to personally thank the following representatives and



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their staffs for going out of their way to help Texas fire fighters in this legislative session: Terry Canales, Oscar Longoria, Will Metcalf, Jared Patterson, Dustin Burrows, Speaker Dade Phelan, Mary Ann Perez, Giovanni Capriglione, and Mary Gonzalez. We also appreciate the hard work of the following senators and their staffs: Chuy Hinojosa, Brandon Creighton, Drew Springer, and Judith Zaffirini.

On a final note, please remember that, even in hard political times, Texas fire fighters have many friends at the Capitol and we are always open to having more. We proudly work with elected officials and staff across the political spectrum. For that reason, I encourage you to get to better know your local senators and representatives. We may not agree on some issues, but TSAFF finds ways to work with almost everyone in the legislature. Of course, I will gladly help make introductions either in your district at home or in Austin.

We will provide another legislative update as soon as possible. In the meantime, to read more about the legislation noted, please go to www.capitol.texas.gov, and please contact me with any questions or comments about our work at the state capitol.

Political Report Using Creative Political Solutions in Pandemic Response

TSAFF ready to help with political programs

*Political Director
Joe Tellez*

As we continue the new year, we are faced with new challenges. The pandemic has changed the way that we and the rest of the world do business. As we move forward, there is some uncertainty in how the political landscape looks because it is constantly changing. Because of this, we have had to adapt and innovate in order to meet these challenges head on. The most important part of the political picture that did not change is the need for locals to get engaged and stay involved in the political process. This makes a difference especially at the local level.

The campaign season looked vastly different this year. Gone was the ability to meet face-to-face as well as conduct political campaigns in the usual manner. The ability to do grassroots work was greatly affected had to be modified into a virtual type of campaigning. Creative solutions had to be employed and targeting both the campaign and the voter was vital to success.

Some examples include the race for Texas House of Representatives District 60. This was one of our targeted races in the primary. Our endorsed candidate, Dr. Glenn Rogers, ended up in a run-off with Jon Francis, a member of the billionaire Wilks family. Since there was no way to match the opponent dollar by dollar, a grassroots strategy needed to be put into action. Working with the TSAFF Executive Board and staff, our political consultant, Mike Stevens, developed a plan that involved the members in Brownwood to help push Dr. Glenn Rogers over the top. By getting involved at the grassroots level, and using our resources we

were successful in helping our endorsed candidate get elected.

Texarkana L-367 employed the same strategy in their referendum election in November. The local was seeking to amend their City Charter with a provision to include binding arbitration in the contract negotiations impasse procedure. The local decided to move forward with the charter change after two years of failed negotiations with the city even though the citizens of Texarkana voted to approve the right to collectively bargain in 2016.

These are just two examples of political involvement at the local level. Every day as we go about the business of representing our members, we are looking at ways to make things better. Some of these challenges will require some sort of political involvement. That is why



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it is important to have a relationship with our local leaders. In these times, it is more important than ever.

It has been said over and over again but it needs to be repeated. We as fire fighters can and do make a difference. There are examples of this all across the state. Whether you have a longstanding political program or are just getting started, the TSAFF has the resources in order to assist you.

↓ TSAFF President John Riddle has testified on firefighter issues throughout the legislative session.



Service Report Emerging from COVID-19

Service efforts continue around the state

Service Director

Rafael Torres

As we continue with the fast-moving 2021, we are working on several training and education opportunities coming up for you to take advantage of. Service all over the state is still continuing with the ability of conducting virtual hearings and meetings.

Cleburne L-170 was successful in getting one of their firefighters through a fit for duty challenge under TLGC 143.081.

Fort Worth L-440 was able to negotiate a promotional by-pass appeal and have the firefighter there promoted retroactively to January 2019.

Weslaco L-3207 was able to close out their new labor agreement and settle a grievance while managing to secure pay raise for their members.

There are many more stories like these from all around the state. The district vice presidents and their selected district field service representatives have worked diligently to make sure that service from the TSAFF has continued smoothly during this last year.

Our Locals have reached out to the TSAFF regarding their many different labor issues. Working with these Local leaders we have been able to continue the service and answer many of the questions that have risen during this pandemic period. If any Local leader is having issues or has questions regarding COVID-19 and leaves, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

This July is the TSAFF convention and as always there will be opportunity for further knowledge sharing and networking at this event. For your convenience we have the ability to set up virtual meetings with your Local executive board and grievance committees to assist with a variety of topics, I just need to have ample lead time to get you scheduled in as this new virtual world has increased time demands on our availability. Several Locals have taken advantage of these virtual meetings like Galveston L-571, Kingsville L-2390, Brownsville L-970, and Port Arthur L-397 to name a few.

The 2021 year continues to be remarkably



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busy in regard to discipline, grievances, and negotiations being scheduled. We are always ready to answer your questions and will be looking at how to improve service to our members. We look forward to increasing the opportunity to add to our leader's knowledge and to assist the local with disciplinary appeals, negotiating labor agreements and reviewing potential grievances of your labor agreements or any other service-related issues you might have.



Welcome to New TSAFF Affiliates

Anna L-5287
Atascocita L-5316
Cibolo L-5117
Colleyville L-5268
Converse L-4377
Cypress Creek L-5322
Eastland L-5332
Groves L-1905
League City L-5275

Melissa L-5250
Mexia L-5273
Murphy L-4465
River Oaks L-5264
Sansom Park L-5269
Smith County L-5300
Tomball L-5249
Williamson County ESD 7 L-5296

IAFF District 11 Report ‘Every Local Matters’ – Our Next Steps

Please watch for a new program in 2021

*IAFF 11th District Vice President
R.L. “Sandy” McGhee, III*

Now in my fifth term as your IAFF vice president, representing our Mighty 11th District, I’m proud to represent Texas firefighters – and to continue ensuring that Every Local Matters.

Texas fire fighters rightly expect and demand real, accountable service from our union, not empty promises. I’ve strived to effectively serve you for the past 16 years. With thanks for your recent re-election of me, I promise to maintain that commitment.

In the IAFF election, 180 locals in our district endorsed me. Seven others did not. I appreciated the consensus support, but I also learned a few lessons as well, and I am focused on strengthening our working relationships in Texas and Oklahoma.

If you’ve ever received an email from me, you probably recognize this quote: “The world is run by the people that show up.” I’ve never believed that more than I do today.

For all of us, elections have consequences – within our unions and, more importantly, in our communities. You only need to look as far as Texarkana – or Conroe or Mission or Fort Worth, among so many Texas places – to see local leaders who engage in the political process. By showing up for politics, they build advantages in bargaining and negotiations, bring back greater wins for their members and better defend them from attacks.

All of those wins – and many disputes that were quietly resolved – required political engagement. We’re at a point where I must repeat this: Sitting on the sidelines or endorsing candidates that stand for anti-firefighter principles too often has bad consequences for us

and the people we serve. Toxic politics put at risk our wages, benefits and working conditions – and the safety of the people we serve.

Heading into the TSAFF convention, I’m hoping that you’ll show up too – not just to grab a registration badge and sit quietly. Please plan to participate in the discussions and debates. If you’ve got a question, I encourage you to ask it. If you’re interested in sharing your opinion on a matter of the business of our union, I want to hear your voice. So does the TSAFF. Brothers and sisters, our union always needs strong, principled voices. We need leaders who will stand up for what is right. We need you.

You all know my slogan, my commitment to you... Every Local Matters. But let me take it another step to emphasize this: your voice matters too. If you’re headed to your first convention or perhaps your last, you all enjoy the same title and privilege... member and delegate to the TSAFF convention. There will be no big locals or small locals there – just strong, committed union leaders trying to build on the momentum of the TSAFF, the IAFF and their Locals at home.

Of course, political work is at the heart of our mission. But with that mayor you didn’t talk to or that other endorsement you didn’t make, or the one that you did make, elections matter. They dictate almost everything in our careers and the lives of our members.

Later this year, we are launching an in person and online Every Local Matters Institute and New Leaders Academy. This exciting program will capture the best that your IAFF and TSAFF have to offer. I’m going to be recruiting subject matter experts to deliver the answers



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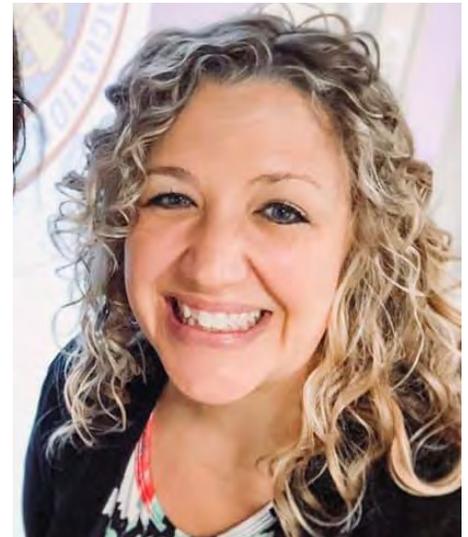
you need. And we’re going to make those answers available to you anytime through a new expanded online institute which will launch after our first academy.

Looking back for a moment, five years ago, my communications team helped improve member access to IAFF resources with the launch of social media outreach. The year after that, with your TSAFF leadership, I began doing in-station visits as part of the first Every Local Matters Tour. And now this year, as we prepare to move into a post COVID-19 economy and bargaining environment, we’ll soon be expanding the education and mentoring program within our district.

With this proven plan and system we’ve developed, right here with our world-class IAFF and TSAFF political and communications teams, I hope to be sharing good news soon about what your local accomplished.

In the meantime, I look forward to seeing and hearing from you at the TSAFF convention. And with so much promise on the horizon for our union, I’m grateful and excited to be working for you throughout the Mighty 11th District.

MDA New Options for 'Fill the Boot'



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A reminder that families are at heart of our mission

Becky Prine

It's that time of year - we are preparing for Fill the Boot! Last year was a challenge for everyone. COVID-19 changed everything and impacted everyone. Thank you for all you did to support your communities throughout the pandemic and every day. We are grateful for those who were able to collect for MDA last year and hope that this year, we will have a more normal year for Fill the Boot.

If your fire department is able to go out and do a traditional collection, we are ready to support you! Texas is almost always the top collecting state for Fill the Boot and I know we can be there again in 2021! We are already seeing departments across the country setting dates and had our first Local collect on the streets here in March. We also have the option for you to collect virtually this year or you can choose to do both traditional and virtual.

Because of you, families across the state are able visit our MDA Care Centers. I am also happy to share that research IS making

a difference, with 12 FDA approved medications now available to treat diseases covered by MDA. Three of those were just approved in the last five months, which is amazing! THANK YOU! You truly make a difference in the lives of families in your communities!

MDA has created toolkits to help you plan your traditional Fill the Boot, virtual Fill the Boot or special events this year. Go to firefighters.mda.org to find these toolkits, social media images, press releases and much more helpful information.

Please contact me to get your dates scheduled, order supplies, to ask questions or for help in planning how your Local will Fill the Boot this year. We look forward to hearing from you soon and to working with your Local in 2021.

Registration opens for summer camp

Registration is open for virtual MDA Summer Camp for children ages 8 to 17 living with

muscular dystrophy and related neuromuscular diseases. MDA Summer Camp, which has been offered in-person for more than 65 years, is being held virtually for the second year due to the pandemic. The online registration link is at: <https://www.mda.org/virtual-camp>

For families, by families

Families are at the heart of MDA's mission. A caring and concerned group of families started MDA in 1950, and we continue to relentlessly pursue our promise to free families from the life-threatening effects of muscular dystrophy and muscle-debilitating diseases today.

MDA uses every dollar we raise wisely to ensure it has the greatest impact in the fight to end muscular dystrophy. We strive to provide you with transparency and clarity around how contributions make a difference and how MDA is supporting your community.

MDA takes a big-picture perspective across neuromuscular diseases to uncover breakthroughs that will accelerate treatments and cures. The power in this research approach is that knowledge and information from one disease can often yield progress in others to speed urgently needed answers for families.



Guest Commentary

Firefighter Pensions and Social Security:

What You Need to Know

Devin Carroll

If you are a firefighter and are planning for retirement, you need to know the rules on receiving firefighter pensions and Social Security. Specifically, you need to understand how much the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) will reduce your Social Security payments.

This rule can reduce the Social Security benefit rules of anyone who:

- Worked at a job where they did not pay Social Security taxes and qualified for a pension from that job, and,
- Worked at another job where they did pay Social Security taxes, which qualified them for Social Security benefits

While these WEP rules affect anyone who has a pension from a job where they didn't pay Social Security, there is a special nuance in these rules that could help ease the pain for many firefighters. Before we jump into that, let's cover a few of the basics.

The WEP penalty

If you have earned a Social Security benefit from work where you did pay into Social Security, you probably have seen a statement of estimated benefits. One of the most important things to know upfront is that the penalty amount from the WEP is not reflected in your estimated benefits. This is because the Social Security Administration does not know whether an individual is eligible for a pension from non-covered work and will thus use the normal benefit formula to calculate future payment estimates.

The Social Security Administration only learns about non-covered employment once the individual applies for benefits and will then

recalculate the benefit with the alternate WEP formula.

The Social Security benefits estimate statement says this:

In the future, if you receive a pension from employment in which you do not pay Social Security taxes, such as some federal, state or local government work, some nonprofit organizations or foreign employment, and you also qualify for your own Social Security retirement or disability benefit, your Social Security benefit may be reduced, but not eliminated, by WEP. The amount of the reduction, if any, depends on your earnings and number of years in jobs in which you paid Social Security taxes, and the year you are age 62 or become disabled.

How much is the WEP penalty?

In 2021, the maximum WEP penalty is \$498. There are a few factors that can reduce this penalty amount, but to fully understand how these factors may affect your personal situation requires understanding the basic benefit calculation.

When Social Security benefits are calculated, the SSA inflates your historical earnings (that were subject to Social Security taxes), takes your highest 35 years of earnings, and divides by 420 (the number of months in 35 years). This gives them the inflation-adjusted average indexed monthly earnings. The SSA website will frequently refer to this by its acronym AIME.

Next, the calculation applies your monthly average to what is commonly called the "bend point" formula.

Two numbers make up the bend-point



formula, which creates three bands your average income falls into to determine your benefit amount:

- For earnings that fall under the first bend point, you multiply by 90%. That is the first part of your benefit.
- For earnings that fall between the first and second bend point, you multiply by 32%. That is the second part of your benefit.
- For earnings that are greater than the second bend point, you multiply by 15%. This is the third part of your benefit.

The result of this formula is your primary insurance amount (PIA) which is also known as your full retirement age benefit.

Here's where the WEP enters the calculation. If you have a pension from work where no SS taxes were paid, your benefits are calculated on a slightly alternate formula and the result of this alternate formula is a lower benefit amount.

At first glance this alternate formula looks nearly identical to the 'normal' formula. However, upon closer inspection, you'll notice that the difference between the two formulas is found within the first "bend point." Instead of the 90 percent found in the normal formula, your earnings are credited to your final Social Security benefit at 40 percent.

The difference is the 90 percent of the first bend point and 40 percent of the first bend point is the penalty amount. Using the 2020 Social Security formula, this works out as follows:

Guest Commentary

(continued)

- (-) \$996 x 90% = \$896
- (-) \$996 x 40% = \$398
- 2020 Penalty: \$498

The bend points generally increase every year in response to the Average Wage Index. When the first bend point increases, so does the penalty amount.

Reducing (or eliminating) the WEP penalty

One of the aspects which is unique to many firefighters is they often work more than one job. The non-firefighting job is often covered by Social Security. If there are enough years of earnings at the second job, and those earnings were in excess of a certain annual amount, the WEP penalty will begin to decline.

This decline in the WEP penalty starts with 21 years of substantial covered earnings (where

you paid Social Security tax). At 30 years of substantial covered earnings, the WEP does not apply.

This is where understanding the benefits calculation that we just covered comes in handy. If you have less than 21 years of substantial earnings, the first bend point multiplier is 40%. For each year of substantial earnings beyond 20, you simply add 5% to the multiplier. For example, if you have 21 years of substantial earnings, the first multiplier would be 45%. At 22 years it would be 50%. At 23 years it would be 55% and at 30 years it would have worked itself back up to the full 90% that is used for individuals without a non-covered pension.

This phase-out of the WEP reduction offers an incredible planning opportunity if you are working at another job where you are paying Social Security tax. What's especially important to know for firefighters whose second

job is through self-employment is that the definition of "substantial earnings" is a hard line. If you are one dollar short of the threshold it will not be counted towards the 30 years necessary to wipe out the WEP penalty.

If you consider how much more in benefits you could receive over your retirement lifetime, eliminating the WEP penalty could be worth \$100,000 or more in extra income over a 20-year retirement! Obviously, not everyone has the option of accumulating enough years to wipe out the big monthly WEP reduction. But for those who do, or can get close, it's worth taking a closer look.

The father of a Texarkana firefighter, Devin Carroll is a financial planner in Texarkana. For more information, you can find him online at socialsecurityintelligence.com.



← Like many TSAFF members that will go the extra mile, fire fighters from Carrollton L-2182 helped citizens in need by lowering their bed.



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BROWNSVILLE 970 - Mario Guerrero, Sean Hemmingway

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