



The Siren

Important News and Updates for NYSPFFA Members

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NYS Professional Firefighters

Michael McManus

President

Sam Fresina

Secretary/Treasurer

Frank DeMart

Executive Vice-President

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

119 Washington
Ave., Suite 306
Albany, NY 12210
518-436-8827
FAX: 518-436-8830

nyspffa.org

profire@nyspffa.org

Hurricane Sandy Tests First Responders

When the people of the New York City region were told to begin preparing for a potential “superstorm,” many recalled the similar warnings in advance of 2011’s largest storm, Hurricane Irene. But while most of Irene’s impact occurred Upstate, Sandy hit the major population centers of New York City, Long Island, Westchester and Rockland counties hard. The result was a region-wide disaster, cutting off electricity, communications and transportation systems, which required assistance from additional statewide locals, including Long Beach.

Whether it was leading the evacuation of at-risk neighborhoods, rescuing trapped victims from homes and cars after the floodwaters came, or braving chest-deep water while fighting fires, our first responders answered the call.

Gov. Cuomo acknowledged it when he said “I saw people put themselves in the way of danger that was really very inspirational....These first responders were running right into the face of danger. It was frightening, it was truly frightening.”

The region’s recovery from this storm will be a lengthy one. But we cannot let the public and our elected officials forget our critical role in protecting New Yorkers.

NYSPFFA Insurance - [Open Enrollment](#) through December 7.

*Election Day - Tuesday, Nov. 6 - **please be sure to vote!***

[Support Buffalo Firefighters Rally](#) - Nov. 8, Buffalo City Hall (more [here](#))

Upcoming District Meetings—[5th District](#): December 4

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the information in this newsletter, please contact Joseph Dougherty or John Black at (518) 436-0751. For other questions or concerns, please contact Mike McManus or Sam Fresina at (518) 436-8827.

GOV. UNSYMPATHETIC TO STRUGGLING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Gov. Cuomo was recently asked about the impact of the property tax cap and state-imposed mandates on their local budgets. The Governor emphasized that because the state is dealing with its own fiscal problems, struggling local governments will have to resolve their own problems.

The Governor [said](#):

"I had to go back and balance my budget myself...that's called life. That's called the constraints that you're in as a government official today. You have to balance the budget. You can't go to the taxpayers and ask for more than a two-percent increase, unless they want to pay over two percent and then they can vote for it with over 60 percent...You have to balance the budget without saying you want more money from above or less responsibility from above. That is being a government official today."

Mayors from cities around the state disagreed, and are calling on Albany to either provide more money to local governments, or relief from what they consider to be "unfunded mandates."

NYSPPFA MEETS WITH UNIFORMED COALITION

In preparation for the 2013 Legislative Session, NYSPPFA leadership recently met with top officials from public safety groups across the state to dis-

cuss numerous issues likely to be taken up during 2013-14 SFY Budget as well as during the upcoming session.

NYSPPFA discussed and developed preliminary strategies regarding several important issues including but not limited to the institution of local and/or statewide fiscal control boards, renewal of binding arbitration and modification of the Triborough Amendment.

COURT OF APPEALS: WALLKILL POLICE CANNOT BARGAIN DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

As a result of a recent state [Court of Appeals decision](#), officials in the town of Wallkill have the authority to suspend, fire or otherwise discipline their police officers for misbehavior — instead of turning cases over to an independent arbitrator — under the terms of their union contract. "Accordingly, the subject of police discipline resides with the Town Board and is a prohibited subject of collective bargaining" between the town and the Police Officers' Benevolent Association, the court said. Court papers cited many other police unions that could be impacted by this ruling.

This decision represents yet another recent decision by the state's highest court which threatens collective bargaining.

BUFFALO NEWSPAPER CALLS FOR CHANGES TO TAYLOR LAW, TRIBOROUGH

The editorial board of the *Buffalo News* recently [urged](#) Gov. Cuomo to "reconsider" the Taylor Law and the Triborough Amendment.

Though they acknowledge that these laws provide "some necessary protections for unions within them," the *News* wants to see them changed to give the government a stronger hand in negotiations with public sector unions.

But let's not forget why the Triborough Amendment exists — because the Taylor Law took away our right to strike.

Triborough requires the employer to continue all terms and conditions of employment, unchanged, until a new contract is negotiated. Since we do not have the right to strike, this forces the employer to negotiate in good faith. The Triborough Amendment merely provides us with an "even playing field" when contracts come up for negotiation.

The IAFF Disaster Relief Fund provides assistance to IAFF members who have suffered hardship as a result of a disaster. Get IAFF's application form [here](#).