

## **Greetings 1<sup>st</sup> District Labor Leaders;**

First off, I would like to thank everyone for their outstanding support for our 1<sup>st</sup> District Firefighters, Fire Officers and EMS workers who were adversely affected by Hurricane Sandy. While others waited for government assistance and an overwhelmed insurance industry's resources, our members went right to work helping each other with work crews and resources to move forward and reaffirm the meaning of "Brotherhood". While our politicians fumbled the ball, you never lost track of our members and their families' need. For that, I want to pass along my deepest thanks and gratitude!

Some upcoming IAFF Events include the following:

- The IAFF Political Training Academy, February 9<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> in Baltimore, Maryland
- The IAFF Alfred K. Whitehead Legislative Conference, March 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> in Washington, DC.

We also just concluded our IAFF Affiliate Leadership Training Academy (ALTS) last week in Phoenix, Arizona. We had over 1,300 IAFF members attend and offered 90 different courses on such topics as Leadership, Politics, the Media, and the attacks on our Pension and Health Care. For those who attended, the only complaint was not being able to attend more of these important classes. For those who did not attend, I would like to emphasize how important these events can be in the economic and political climate that we currently live in. It continues to be our most popular offering. Also, following this conference, was the Labor Management Initiative (LMI) where labor and management were brought in to emphasize the need for proper communication between the two parties, particularly in these depressed economic times we live in. I believe the 1<sup>st</sup> District members should be making a better show at these events to bring back the knowledge and skill necessary to fight back in the times we live.

Currently, locally, the NYSPFFA is moving aggressively forward to fight our "White House Wannabe" Governor Cuomo's budget item that limits our interest arbitration under "ability to pay" clause to restrict it for HIS definition of "fiscally distressed" municipalities. The NYSPFFA's attorney's economic advisor states that 95% of NYS Locals municipality will currently fall under this restriction. It further restricts any raise against any increase in municipalities' health care costs. Not only is this another attack on our police

and firefighters in the State, but this type of proposal will gut the whole reason to go to arbitration in the first place. ALL New York Locals should have a member in Albany on Monday, February 4<sup>th</sup> to combat this proposal. More information can be found on the [www.nypffa.org](http://www.nypffa.org) web page. Included on this page, is a letter to Governor Cuomo from IAFF General President Shaitberger lambasting such a proposal. I wish to acknowledge and thank NYSPFFA President McManus for his advocacy against this tyrannical Governor's proposal.

In New Jersey, Local 788 has just had its arbitration award overturned. This sets a dangerous precedent and our IAFF Legal Team is working with the PFANJ President and others to formulate a proper response to this travesty that Local 788's firefighters have waited a long time for. Our New Jersey members will be best served by attending next week's PFANJ Meeting on Wednesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, so that they can all be brought up to speed on the various subjects of grievances, lawsuits and what else is going on in the state. Please also access the [www.pfanj.org](http://www.pfanj.org) for the wealth of information and current events that are always highlighted there.

Our local leaders should all understand their members W-2's which are all coming out about this time. Many of you will be questioned about a number that will be reported in Box 12 of the W-2. Under the identifying moniker DD you will see what your municipality paid last year for your health care costs. It is important to understand that there is NO current tax consequence for this reporting. It is there for the future and might be able to be used to find health care savings in future bargaining sessions.

Once more the issue of OUR IAFF members volunteering in their off time has become problematic. Helping one's community, while noble in its gesture, can have serious personal consequences to our members. Should you get hurt or injured while being a volunteer, you might lose your job as a professional firefighter depending on where your IAFF membership is. We have seen instances where professional firefighters out on medical leave, have been severely hurt while volunteering. This can also bring a backlash or a cause against many of our presumptive laws for firefighting. It is further infuriating, when retired members volunteer in an area that has a combination department and create the illusion that the municipalities can gut our IAFF members' livelihood. Each Local should examine its Constitution and By Laws to see how best to make our members understand the grave consequences of volunteering while being an IAFF member. We are passed the time to keep

discussing this issue, and should start taking action before more of our members lose their benefits, or their jobs!

The World Trade Center Victim Compensation Fund gave out its first awards last week. This was a long time coming to provide our members with the necessary resources to pay their mounting medical bills, and give their families some piece of mind. For all the volunteers who came to New York back in 2001, your members should be involved with the WTC Medical Monitoring Program through Logistic Health, Inc. (LHI) which runs the national program. You do not have to be sick or ill to get in the program. You can reach LHI at 877-498-2911 to apply and register.

It is with great sadness that I report on the two latest WTC victims who passed away earlier this week. Local 854's Lt Marty Fullam, a double lung transplant recipient, passed away on Monday, January 28<sup>th</sup> at home with his family by his side from pulmonary complications. Our members should know that though Marty was sick and hurting, he made numerous trips down to Washington, DC to help get the Zadroga Bill passed. His revealing testimony of his exposure and its complications helped put a face to what our members were going through. He was an honorable man that we all owe much to and epitomized what firefighting is all about! We also lost Local 94's Firefighter Chuck Jones from Ladder 165 after his courageous battle with esophageal Cancer. Everyone who knew Chuck, loved Chuck. He will be sorely missed.

I wish to thank all our District Labor Leaders for taking on the challenging job in these times we live in. Don't hesitate to ask me, our Field Service Reps, or the IAFF for assistance when you believe we can help. Thanks for keeping your members safe!

Fraternally,

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