

Five State Summit Meeting - Fairfax, VA. - November 20, 2004

EDIAFC Board Members

Bernie Cohan	President, EDIAFC	732-607-1834	chiefbernie44@cs.com
Michael Chiaramonte	1 st VP, EDIAFC	516-887-3292	lynbrookfd@aol.com
James Watson	2 nd VP, EDIAFC	302-322-0701	kingshimr@aol.com
William Walton	Int'l Director, EDIAFC	302-892-2807	waltonjr@comcast.net
William Askenstedt	Sec/Tres. EDIAFC	609-448-3642	ewvfchief@aol.com
James Seavey	Past Pres. EDIAFC	301-252-5315	mdfire0412@aol.com
Les Warrick	DE Dir. EDIAFC	302-994-0705	lwwar14@msn.com
Jack Gouty	MD Dir. EDIAFC	410-551-5962	firechief291@aol.com
Ted Lowden	NJ Dir. EDIAFC	856-983-2210	tlowden@eveshamfire.org
Ken Pienkowski	NY Dir. EDIAFC	315-468-4421	kenpinky@aol.com
Robert Stahl	PA Dir. EDIAFC	215-357-6880	rgstahl@isrt.com

State Chiefs Associations

Delaware

Rodney Marvel	Pres. DE State Chiefs		rmarvel@sussexcounty.net
Tucker Dempsey	1st VP DE State Chiefs	302-674-5432	tucker@vhc27.com
Bill Betts	Secretary DE State Chiefs	302-678-6312	wbetts@aaahawk.com
Ken McMahon	DE Fire Commission		dsfpcom@aol.com

Maryland

Roger Steger Sr.	Pres. MD State Chiefs	410-213-0780	fchief750@aol.com
Steve Miller	MD Chiefs/VCOS	301-252-5316	Smillrrat@aol.com
Paul Sterling	MD Chiefs	301-840-2656	paulsterling@aol.com

New Jersey

William Dukes	Pres. NJ Career Chiefs	856-234-6053x5907	wdukes@mountlaurelfire.org
C. Kenneth Anderson	NJ State Chiefs/C&B	609-267-8226	kenander@eticomm.net

New York

Tom LaBelle	Exec. Dir. NYSAFC	800-676-3473	tlabelle@nysfirechiefs.org
George Maney	Pres. NYSAFC	607-729-4168	gmaney075@aol.com
Robert Holley	1 st VP NYSAFC	631-521-0025	chiefholley@aol.com

Pennsylvania

Ed Mann	State Fire Commissioner	717-651-2204	emann@state.pa.us
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IAFC

Garry Briese	Exec. Dir. IAFC	703-273-0911	gbriese@iafc.org
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The Summit convened at 0930 on Saturday, November 20, 2004

President Bernie and IAFC Executive Director Garry Briese provided the welcome and opening remarks. President Cohan thanked Garry Briese for hosting the EDIAFC Board Meeting and 5 State Summit. Chief Askenstedt thanked Christine Booth from the IAFC Staff for handling the arrangements for the meeting

IAFC Status Report - Garry Briese, Executive Director of the IAFC

Need for a strong relation between the IAFC, Divisions and State Associations.

Garry welcomed everyone to IAFCHQ. He explained it is the member's facility and that the IAFC has paid off the mortgage and continues to use the facility for rental income.

Currently the EDIAFC is the only organization holding summits of this nature. Garry believes it is critical to continue these and to encourage other Divisions to do the same.

There is a need for speedy and timely communications. Some states are doing daily and weekly email to their members. There is a need to focus on priorities as opposed to broad agendas. There is simply not enough time and resources for broad agendas.

There is a need to have Division and State Chief's Strategic Plans mirror the IAFC Strategic Plan. Garry distributed the IAFC Plan for 2005-2006 and a template for Divisions and States to use as a guide to developing their plans. **(The IAFC Strategic Plan is available in the EDIAFC Web Site)**

Garry stated that every State Chiefs Association needs to have paid office staff. He believes it is absolutely necessary for success of the state organizations. There was discussion that the major road block to having career staff was finding a funding source. There was discussion of several potential possibilities but the consensus was that it was a problem.

Two Hatter Issues

Alan Caldwell described the history of including the "two hatter" language in the Fire Act legislation and why the IAFC opposed the language. There is language in the Safer Act that prohibits using Safer funds to hire firefighters if there is discrimination against volunteering.

Garry explained the potential for adding other riders to the Fire Act, such as overweight or oversize restrictions. He said that if we open the door to attachments like the discrimination clause, we may end up with other attachments that may be negative. He believes that we need to keep attachments off the Fire Act. Two attachments thus far have been the 5% use for Fire Prevention and the non apparatus clause.

Garry explained that the IAFC and the IAFF have been holding joint meetings with labor and chiefs. They include combination departments and ask that three people attend; the chief, the union and the volunteer rep. The meeting with the IAFF over the two hatter issue is still planned but on hold at this time. Garry discussed the power of the IAFF even though they suffered a set back in the Presidential election. He said they still have power because they stick to their candidates and actively support them.

Garry said the first meeting with the IAFF will be small and it remains to be seen where the meeting will go. The IAFF has a problem with their Constitution and By Laws which restricts what they can negotiate. They need to have changes made by their members at their convention. He believes it will be difficult.

Garry discussed the Edison, NJ funeral for a volunteer chief and how the union Honor Guard was restricted from participating in the funeral by the union leaders. The IAFF is investigating. Bill Dukes said there may be another side to the story. He said there was a rumor that volunteers may have previously boycotted the funeral of a career Captain. Chief Dukes is working to get a clear picture and resolution of the facts. He feels the issue should be handled at the State level at this point. Garry Briese agreed.

Chief Dukes said NJ is planning bi-annual summits with all fire organizations including the unions. He said that of about 350 bills posted each year in the NJ legislature, 15 jointly affect the entire fire service and those can get a consensus of all of the groups. Bill pointed out the success of the self dispatch legislation in NJ as an example cooperative efforts. Garry said the coalitions were very important and offered the help of the IAFC where possible.

Garry said the scope of the two hatter problem needed to be determined. Resolutions need to be handled locally when possible. Low level harassment exists all over. It is a hostile work place issue. Chiefs are obligated to manage the workplace and are legally bound to eliminate hostile workplace conditions of any kind, including two hatter harassment. Garry believes that a strong Chief can manage the issue in his department. Overall, Garry believes the issue will be resolved by a hostile workplace lawsuit against the Department, the Chief and the Union. The victim, if properly prepared will likely win a large settlement which will promote solutions.

Chief Seavey stated that the problem is that we are losing many volunteers due the discrimination and harassment of two hatters. He said he agreed that Garry's scenario of a lawsuit will likely be the solution. He said it could also be resolved internally if the IAFF was willing to make changes to their By-laws. In Maryland, the IAFC representatives are being slammed for not solving the problems. There are very vocal people in Maryland blasting the IAFC for failing to resolve the two hatter issue.

Chief Cohan asked about the meeting between Garry Briese and Mike Krause from the IAFF. Garry said they had discussed the Edison issue and the two hatter situation. Garry stated that the IAFC and IAFF were launching a joint initiative on diversity. A volunteer will be included and the issue of volunteers as diversity will be included.

Chief Dukes stated that there needs to be a joint union management meeting and the issues need to be discussed. There needs to be documentation that volunteers were lost to harassment or that union jobs were lost due to increasing the numbers of volunteers. There needs to be focus on exactly what the problems are and how bad are they.

Chief Gouty stated that one problem they experienced was career people being delegated to stations where they served under unqualified volunteer officers. The resolution was officer certification of both career and volunteer officers at the same level.

Chief Seavey said that harassed firefighters do not file complaints because they are afraid of losing their jobs or being further harassed. He cited incidents where this has occurred and there was no action taken to correct the wrongs.

Tom LaBelle from New York said they have less two hatter problems than others. He said what needed to be done was state level discussions at some lower levels to try to get alliances and trust. He said sometimes you can work around certain problem individuals. Garry Briese said that problems often occur because of specific individuals.

Volunteer Issues

Garry said there are several issue for volunteers

Garry said there is no national volunteer policy and focus. He believes that VCOS must take the lead to get this developed at the National level. He also said that there is no national level public relations program that supports the volunteer fire service.

Garry discussed the Geico Insurance decision to deny insurance to homeowners not served by full time fire departments. Tom LaBelle said the decision was quickly reversed. He expressed concern about how the original decision was made by Geico.

Safer Legislation

Garry Briese said that this legislation is designed primarily to hire career firefighters. It is specifically designed to hire new firefighters. Garry said many career departments may not take advantage of the available funding. He said Safer presented a huge opportunity for volunteer and combination departments to fund career people. He said there is a need to educate these departments on what is there and how to get it.

Chief Walton said accessing Safer funds is like the Fire Act. It is difficult and time consuming. There needs to be assistance in educating fire departments.

Commission Ed Mann asked about the methods of accessing the grants. His concern is that there is too little time between when the process is made public and when the grant applications are due. This is particularly a problem in Pennsylvania with so many departments. Garry Briese said he would carry that concern to the program administration. Ed added that there needs to be information down to the local government level

Fire Fighter Safety

Garry announced that the old Health and Safety Committee is now a Section. He said every state will be asked to form a Health and Safety Committee and each state will be asked to supply a contact to the IAFC. He mentioned that the IAFC has about \$1.2 million in grants to fund the near miss program

FRI Changes

Garry distributed the new layout for FRI activities. These are summarized in the handouts. **(These will be sent as attachments in PDF format)** There is also a Grand Prix Race being held the same weekend. It will be held on Sunday. Garry believes they will have an agreement where IAFC attendees can get a free ticket to the race by visiting FRI vendor booths. There will be an IAFC Section in the Grandstand and various prizes. Garry stated there should not be an issue with hotel space due to the race.

Ken Anderson said there may be a problem of finding time for the Division Board Meeting under the new format since it is desired to be held prior to the breakfast.

Chief Seavey stated he had a problem with the breakfast being earlier and being compressed into a shorter format. Garry said the Board has already approved the new format. Several Board members agreed with Jim.

Legislative Report - Alan Caldwell, Government Affairs Director, IAFC

Alan Caldwell will be retiring from the IAFC. Garry Briese said a search will be conducted for his successor. Alan will stay on part time until a successor is found. The key points of his presentation are contained in his handout. The handouts are included in an attachment to these minutes. **(Alan's handout will be provided as an attachment.)**

The 24 MHZ spectrum is under consideration for public safety use. It is being considered now in Congress.

DOT has gone to phase two on "Scope of Practice" This will define the future of all EMS training. This is a critical issue being handled in the IAFC EMS Section. Matt Spangler is the IAFC staff contact for this issue.

Fire Act Authorizations are increasing but there is no guarantee on future appropriations. The Fire Act now allows "non-affiliated organizations to tap the Fire Act up to 2% of the appropriation. These would be non fire/EMS agencies.

The Volunteer Fire Service is guaranteed at least 20% of the Safer Funding.

Alan believes that the 911 Recommendations Implementation Act will not pass in this Congress this session. The bills will start over next year. They contain many good things but they will be implemented through the states. There is a strong need for the State Associations to get actively involved in their states in order to take advantage of the legislation when it does pass.

Bob Stahl stated he has heard the NFA will be getting a new cut of 5% which will cut course deliveries. He also said the ODP's prime concern is terrorism. Alan agreed.

Bill Walton asked when the information on the Safer Act may be available. Alan estimated early next year. He said we will have input in the process.

Ken Anderson asked how we can convince legislators that we need to follow an all hazards approach, not a terrorism approach. Alan said that is a major emphasis for him and the IAFC staff to drive that into every bill. Alan said that the fire service is the sole protector of all hazardous materials threats in the country.

Bill Dukes asked about the need to better support the NFA. He asked if there was a reluctance on our part to support the NFA. This item was tabled to be discussed later in the meeting. Alan said that in general, the NFA was like many other issues that constantly require an ongoing battle to maintain.

Garry Briese and the attendees expressed sincere appreciation to Alan Caldwell for his hard work and dedication to the IAFC.

Membership Report - Members Services Division - Presented by Susan Kalish

Garry announced the hiring of Gioia Albi as the new head of the Member Services Department. She starts Monday, November 22, 2004.

Susan Kalish stated the IAFC has about 12,000 members and the Eastern Division has about 2,518 members.

Susan stated that the most important services that the members receive are the member alerts. She distributed copies of IAFC Conference Schedules, member recruitment promotions, On Scene and registration info on the Wildland Conference for 2005.

Susan spoke about the NFFF Walk of Honor and the special section dedicated to the IAFC. The IAFC section has raised about \$40,000.00 so far. The EDIAFC was the first Division to purchase a brick.

Chief Gouty asked about broader distribution of the member alerts. Chief Askenstedt stated that we were sharing the information electronically through the 5 State coalition.

There was a discussion of the need to recruit new members. There was also discussion of follow up on retention, delinquent notices and renewal notices. Bill Askenstedt stated that the renewal lists and delinquent lists were critical to maintain membership. He will send both lists to Board Members

Garry emphasized that we must move off the Fire Act to some extent. He said we were losing the battle of maintaining the focus on an "all hazard" approach. He said we have not adapted the NFA to teaching the new courses on terrorism. He said we must draw the link between existing training and terrorism. He used the example of using arson as a WMD and drawing a correlation. Garry said it was very important to get the NFA into the new mode of terrorism and WMD.

Ed Mann said Pennsylvania reviewed the various training manuals and found that the Delmar version of the IFSTA manuals contained the WMD section required to make the manuals eligible for federal grant funding. Pennsylvania will get \$284,000.00 to buy manuals for basic firefighter training because they made the connection to terrorism and WMD. Garry stated that this was the important link that had to be made.

Garry stated that the basic roll of fire departments, structure fires, was disappearing. Our roll is changing and we need to embrace our new rolls. We need to assure that the legislature and the public understand our new roll and recognize our connection to the services we provide.

Ed Mann stated that by improving our ability to provide our basic mission, we inherently increase our abilities to respond to all hazards including WMD and terrorism.

Garry stated that the big money will be at the state level and that is why the state needs to be active and they need to have career staff.

Tom LaBelle asked if the other Divisions are supporting the NFA as much as the EDIAFC. Garry said there was a broad base of support, nation wide. He said the difficult problem with getting funding was that the NFA was not supporting the goals of the DHS. He said they have not adapted to the changes they need to.

Ed Mann suggested that there was a great deal of employee dissatisfaction at the NFA. Bob Stahl said he had problems getting certificates. Ed said there were problems with the Pennsylvania weekend at the NFA. There were problems with getting materials and AV equipment.

Chief Dukes said there was a need to promote unified command. Garry said NIMS was developed with a great deal of IAFC input. NIMS promotes unified command. It was argued that the Police do not necessarily embrace NIMS.

There was a great deal of discussion by the delegates from NJ about the lack of participation of the Police in NIMS and in training. There was also discussion of the lack of federal money filtering down to the NJ Fire Service because of the lack of connection between the fire departments and the state.

Garry again repeated the need to have the state associations become involved at the state level and the fact that they cannot do that effectively without having career staff. He stated it was the most important thing that the states can do.

Chief William Killen

Chief Killen stated he attended to show his support of the Division and the 5 State Summit process.

Bill Killen said he looked forward to an ongoing dialogue with the IAFF to resolve problems and gain consensus on common issues. He talked about the new IAFC Strategic Plan and the objective of branding.

A video of a joint IAFC/IAFF initiative to work together for the common good was shown. Garry stated that the initiative is ongoing and he believes the IAFF is sincere in their intent to cooperate with the IAFC. In Virginia, attorney's advised their chiefs not to attend the joint programs but many did anyway. Virginia is a right to work state.

Chief Askenstedt introduced Chief James Watson who presented the new EDIAFC logo to President Cohan. The logo was donated by Rogers Sign Company of Delaware. Chief Rogers is an IAFC/EDIAFC member from Delaware.

Lunch

Reports of the States

Pennsylvania

Ed Mann stated that he attended the summit at the Invitation of President and Secretary of the EDIAFC. He is the State Fire Commissioner from Pennsylvania appointed by the Governor. The Governor charged Ed with administration of a 25 million dollar grant program for Volunteer Fire and EMS Companies. The grant program has become an on going program. Grant awards require participation in PFIRS incident reporting. Grants are awarded on a points basis. The more points the more money. Having certified personnel allows a department to get additional points. The certification requirement remains in the program and there has been an increased interest in getting people certified. Ed feels the requirement has been successful in its intent. The grant breaks down into 22 million for fire and 3 million for EMS.

About 18 months ago a bipartisan commission was requested to look at the fire service in Pennsylvania. There are too many fire departments and municipalities in PA. It took almost a year to create the Commission. It has 25 members including career and volunteer members and legislative members at the state and local levels. Bill Jenaway was elected as the chair. The commission met monthly since March. A final report has been drafted and sent to the legislature. It defines the problems and includes recommendations for changes. It contains 24 points. These were ranked in importance.

The number one point in importance was the issue of the need for a unified public safety code. The second most important point was the establishment of a requirement for local government to draft a formal recognition of the fire department that will provide the official service to the government and what level of service will be provided under the agreement. NFPA level of service models were used. This formal recognition will now be required before a fire department can be eligible for grants through the state. This assumes passage of the legislation.

There was considerable discussion about the number and variations of fire departments in Pennsylvania. Many are unrecognized by any public government. There is no real regulation for the establishment of a fire department or the number of fire departments. Some municipalities in PA do not contribute anything to their fire departments. There are problems with workers comp. PA is also looking at LOSAPS.

The state is looking to find an approach to fix the fire service that covers all areas; career and volunteer, paid EMS, etc. There are career departments in PA that respond with 2 man engines and ladders or even single man engines.

PA is switching to the Delmar training manuals statewide These include a WMD component. They have been able to get federal grants through ODP for the manuals because of the WMD component.

PA is trying to get a program in place which mirrors the Police training. They are looking for \$2 million dollars to pay recruit salaries while the recruits are in training. The money would be paid assuming the firefighter came out of the training with basic certifications as defined by the career chiefs. The IAFF is supporting the initiative. Ed believes the bill will pass this year.

PA received a Fire Act Grant that will allow them to do 6 to 8 Juvenile Fire Setter Programs across the state. The State Police and Health Care Professionals are involved with the programs. They should begin soon.

The House Veterans Affairs Committee is lending financial support to the HR 670 legislation. This is the legislation that resulted from the bipartisan commission on the PA Fire Service.

Ed stated that the Fire Service has difficulty recruiting Firefighters because there is nothing to offer. PA has become a training ground for firefighters for neighbor states.

Chief Chiaramonte asked what type of levels of service would be agreed to between local government and the fire departments under the proposed legislation from the bipartisan commission. Ed answered that there are nine different levels of service that can be agreed upon between local government and fire departments. Ed is hopeful that the legislation may be successful.

Chief Seavey thanked Ed for participating in the summit. He stated that PA has always been a problem because it is very fragmented.

Commissioner Mann stated he had experienced trouble when asking fire departments to be accountable in order to be eligible for grants.

Chief Seavey said that there is a situation in Maryland that seems to have come from PA. The situation is that some fire departments are now attempting to charge for fire services. Ed answered that it is not prohibited by PA law but there is no law that requires insurance companies pay the bill. He said that there is a national trend toward billing for services. He also experienced mutual aid companies billing in towns where they provided mutual aid services. PA is trying to get the billing issue removed in PA. Tom LaBelle stated that he was concerned that billing for service would prompt suits over the quality of service.

Tom Markey said that the Keystone Meeting is going on at the same time as this meeting. He said the EDIAFC Conference conflicts with the EDIAFC Conference and he will try to change the Keystone dates.

Keystone dues is \$10.00 and they are looking into a paid director as well.

New Jersey

Ken Anderson presented a power point program about the State Fire Chiefs Association. **His program is included as an attachment to these minutes.**

Ken explained the Emergency Services Deployment Legislation which was primarily the result of self deployment to 911 in New York. It requires officer certifications and requires departments to develop written mutual aid plans. It also establishes the office of the state fire commissioner who has the ability to direct or re-direct mutual aid responses during emergencies.

Chief Seavey asked about A-624 pending in NJ. Chief Anderson and Chief Dukes explained that the proposed bill allows a municipality to pass an ordinance that requires departments with 4 or more career members to appoint a career chief. The municipality does not have to pass such an ordinance under the proposed legislation.

Ken talked about some third party groups working on critical incident stress programs for the state. He questioned whether the groups were going in separate ways rather than working together.

Chief Dukes expounded on the State Fire Safety task Force. It was begun under Gov. McGreevy after 911. He said that the deployment legislation that came out of the commission was implemented for the Republican National Convention and it worked very well. Bill is hoping the task force remains intact after the resignation of the Governor and is converted to the Strategic Planning Group for the NJ Fire Service.

Bill believes that there is a need for oversight of fire departments in NJ just like there is for Police Departments. When there is an inappropriate action or actions by fire departments, there should be an agency which steps in and reviews the problems and, if necessary, takes over the department until the problems can be corrected. Bill believed that this will create some resistance from many volunteer fire departments in the state but that it needs to happen despite the resistance. Bill said many departments have serious problems that are being overlooked for political reasons. He related incidents which ended in tragedy because of lack of oversight.

Chief Dukes said the Fire Commission will recommend that there be a formal complaint process for investigation and corrective action when fire departments do not perform at reasonable levels of expectations. They would use the Attorney Generals office and the State Fire Marshal. Bill thinks the program must be promoted to the fire departments rather than mandated to them.

Chief Dukes said he hoped the Task Force would be maintained in the Office of the State Division of Fire Safety and not be placed in the State Fire Safety Commission. He does not believe the Commission has done much good in 15 years of existence. He said they still do not even mandate Firefighter 1.

Chief Dukes discussed the bi-annual summit. Bill did not feel the Department of Community Affairs wanted the summit. Mount Laurel will probably host it in February. Bill said everyone was welcome to attend the meeting.

Chief Dukes discussed the Division of Fire Safety. It has had problems throughout its history but it is finally working. It is critical to the Fire Service. Recently it has become more beneficial and less political. Bill wants the fire service to tell the governors office to make the office of the Division of Fire Safety non-political and elevate it from the DCA to a cabinet level office.

Chief Dukes noted that he agreed that an Executive Director was needed for the NJ Fire Service. He said that NJ had a State Chiefs Association, a Career Chiefs Association, and a Volunteer Chiefs Association. There is a strong effort to merge the three into a state coalition that could better the fire service. At FDIC East there was a summit of the three groups which produced a joint position paper on issues of mutual agreement. Three volunteer issues were agreed on; support for LOSAP, Priority hiring for volunteers, tax breaks for volunteers. Issues beneficial to career chiefs were support of a tenure bill for career chiefs, a standard career path for firefighters, and a training requirement.

Ken Anderson said he was optimistic about the future of the NJ summit. He was concerned that the unions were not involved. Bill Dukes said they were in attendance at the summit and he hoped they would have more input in the future.

Tom Markey from PA commented that the NJ deployment legislation had an effect on NJ mutual into PA. Chief Lowden responded that fire departments and counties and states were working on agreements with mutual aid agencies. He said the legislation allows for cross county and cross state lines and it was never intended to infringe on normal historic mutual aid.

Maryland

Chief Gouty reported that he had distributed a roster of MSFCA Officers. He said MD State Symposiums will be opened up to officers of the 5 State Summit to attend at in state prices rather than out of state.

MD is very active in legislative activities. They have discussed a paid Executive Director for MD. The issue is funding for the position. MD wishes to hire someone and is investigating possible funding. MD dues is \$10 per year and they have 230 members. There are 358 fire departments in MD. They also have an associate member category.

Chief Seavey and Chief Gouty commented on Roger Steger's commitment to the 5 State Summit despite his absence. Jim also stated that Paul Sterling, 2nd VP had also wanted to attend but had an emergency.

George Maney, President of NYS AFC suggested that NY would send some of their staff to a 5 state meeting to specifically address membership and retention issues. Each state would send membership people to the meeting to share ideas.

Chief Seavey asked to address the situation of fire departments in MD billing for services. He said the MD fire service was opposed to billing for service.

Tom LaBelle said they solved the problem by getting a ruling in NY that said fire departments could bill but they would have to return tax dollars. This discouraged departments from billing.

Ted Lowden commented that EMS billing has caused problems in NJ. Chief McMahon from DE said that EMS billing provided his department with 11 career people and a new ambulance every year.

Delaware

Chief Watson reported Chief Marvel was sorry to miss the meeting due to his health. He is recovering.

DE State Chiefs have adopted NIMS and has appointed a committee to implement it. They have also established a standardization committee to standardize training throughout the state.

DE has a grant to establish a health and fitness program for cardiac testing for firefighters.

All three DE counties have firefighters on the county councils this year.

There was a \$100.00 tax credit increase passed and a \$1,000.00 death benefit increase. The tax break is now \$400.00 and the death benefit is \$7,000.00. MD has a \$3,500 state income tax credit. NY allows Counties to provide property tax incentives.

Several grants were received for communications and special operations teams.

New Castle County gave the County Chiefs a new vehicle for use in attending meetings and conferences. The County is building a new facility for fire administration. The building will provide housing and office space for the various fire and EMS associations. The County also hired five new dispatchers.

New Castle County also gives retired Police cars to any fire department that wants them.

Chief John Ryan passed away at the age of 95, a 60 year Fire Department member and 24 year chief.

There have been several new stations built or being built in New Castle.

Commissioner Ken McMahon announced that the Governor authorized 50 million for upgrades to the 800 mhz radio system.

Chief Dempsey from Sussex County announced that his County has passed impact legislation in their county which is helping fire departments income. Income for the entire County will be \$2-3 million per year split between 18 fire departments. Chief Lowden commented on the advantage of getting impact funds. They are not allowed in NJ.

Wilmington FD is now part of the DVFA despite the fact that it is a fully career department. There has never been a problem between the union and the volunteer departments. Many of the Wilmington firefighters are two hatters.

Kent County now has a technical rescue team headed up by the City of New Jersey.

New York

Tom LaBelle reported that NY Steve Pischiotta had passed away.

The State Fire Academy's burn building has been decommissioned and it will take about \$750,000.00 to get back up and running. This has forced cancellation of recruit training.

The Governor has vetoed \$500 million in fire service training funding. The legislature passed the funding but it was line item vetoed by the Governor. In NY the state has little regulatory authority. Regulations are mostly at the local level. The Department of State now has the ability to review burn buildings and certify them or close them. They also now require NFPA 1403 compliance.

The NYS AFC held an ISO class in Long Island. ISO will do a free two class which explains the ISO rating system. Contact Tom LaBelle for info.

NY held their first accreditation class.

NY has a director of the regional EMS Council in Suffolk County trying to regulate response times. NYS AFC is opposing this. They do not believe the authority should be vested in the coordinator. NY believes it should be a local issue.

The city of Buffalo and Erie County are in extreme financial straits and there are many public safety budget cuts in the works.

NY is looking at Delmar publications for training manuals. PA has already adopted Delmar state wide.

Tom LaBelle passed out brochures on their EMS sections and their fall training seminars. He also provided copies of the latest "Size Up" and a series of safety posters which utilize sports figures to promote safety and the use of PPE.

EDIAFC Conference & IAFC Conference

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

The IAFC Conference is in Denver on August 11-13, 2004 with pre-conference programs on the 9th and 10th. The new format has exhibits on Friday and Saturday, and the banquet on Saturday night. There is no longer a need for a Sunday night stay. The Eastern hotel has not yet been selected. We are looking at the Adams mark or Embassy Suites. Details of Eastern events will be on the EDIAFC Conference page at www.ediafc.org/conference.html. The EDIAFC Breakfast will be on Friday morning at 8:00 AM in the Convention Center. The Room will be announced when determined. Full details of the conference can be found at <http://www.iafc.org/conferences/fri/index.asp> on the new IAFC web site. On line conference and hotel registration is also available here. Members should watch both the Eastern and IAFC web sites for updates on the conferences.

Communications, Web Sites and Email. The Daily Dispatch has over 10,000 subscribers and is growing daily. States are requested to send updated email lists quarterly to linda@griffintabor.com and ewvfchief@aol.com. It is very important to continue to update those lists. We would also welcome other lists such as County Associations, etc. The EDIAFC web site is fully operational and fairly busy. It is requested that all of the states send news items from their states, links to key state web sites, and any other info you would like dispersed in your states to ewvfchief@aol.com

Legislative Issues of Common Interest.

There was a discussion of the NFA situation and what can be done to correct the position. Chief Seavey Recommended that a letter from, Chiefs Killen, Chiaramonte, Lowden and Stahl be drafted from President Cohan to IAFC President DiPoli asking for IAFC action to support the Academy. There is a clear lack of understanding as to where the problem stems. The NFA has failed to develop courses but that may be because there is no funding to so. One issue to be resolved is if there should be a “pay to attend” policy. Another issue is if we want to keep the NFA curriculum as is or do we want to move toward terrorism and WMD issues.

Chief Cohan appointed Mike Chiaramonte, Tucker Dempsey, Mike Granados, Ted Lowden, Bob Stahl and Bill Dukes to draft a letter for his signature, to be transmitted to IAFC.

Valor Nominations: No Report

Fire GPO Update: Chief Seavey, GPO Liaison reported on the Fire Rescue GPO. His report is included as an attachment.

The next GPO will be meeting in Phoenix in conjunction with the Amerinet Conference.

The GPO is up to 12 staff members.

Tom LaBelle stated that there was a need to avoid conflict between existing state revenue streams. He was concerned about possible conflicts between what the GPO was running that competed with the State programs. Chief Askenstedt stated that he had the same concerns and had spoke to Caryn about the possibility of the Divisions and States getting revenue through the E University. This is a strong possibility.

Bill asked each state to provide him with a list of vendors that they would like to have the GPO look at for potential contracts.

Chief Gouty asked for help with next year’s NFFF Memorial Weekend.

The group decided that the next meeting of the 5 states would be February 26th in Evesham Township and the next meeting would be Friday, May 13th at King of Prussia.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30.