



## VOLUNTEER & COMBINATION OFFICERS SECTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS



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**TO:** All VCOS Section Members  
**FR:** Chief Tim Wall, Chair  
**RE:** Chair Update  
**DT:** July 17, 2008

### Three New Board Members Voted In

The unofficial winners of the three at-large director positions are (in alphabetical order):

- Fire Chief Dan Eggleston, Albemarle County Dept of Fire Rescue, Va. (SE Division)
- Deputy Chief Stephen F. Miller, Sr., Cabin John Park Vol. Fire Dept, Md. (EA Division)
- Fire Chief Jim Wilson, Mariposa County Fire Department, Calif. (WE Division)

In addition, our one modification by the bylaws, which was to remove the position of immediate past chair from the board, passed. The immediate past chair will be appointed to a one-year term as a non-voting member.

I want to express my appreciation to all the candidates for their desire to run for the board and to work toward the improvement of the volunteer fire service. The official results of the election will be read at the section meeting at FRI on Thursday, August 14. The section officers will be selected within 30 days after the section meeting.

### Scholarships Available for Symposium Attendees

The Volunteer & Combination Officers Section is offering two \$1,000 scholarships to any member of a volunteer or combination fire department that doesn't have the funds available to travel to our educational conference, [Symposium in the Sun](#), in Clearwater, Fla. The deadline to apply for a scholarship is August 1. Review the [scholarship document for details](#).

### Visit with the VCOS Board at Firehouse in Baltimore

Several VCOS board members will be at Firehouse Expo in Baltimore on July 26-28. Stop by booth #4904 and say hello.

### VCOS Annual Meeting at Fire Rescue International ~ Denver

Make sure you mark your calendar to join us at our annual meeting in Denver on August 14, 2008 from 1:15 – 3:00pm in room 107-113. The "early bird special" prices have been extended to July 25, so it's not too late to [register at FRI Registration](#).

### Distance Education Symposium

The VCOS has partnered with the International Society of Fire Service Instructors (ISFSI) to host the Distance Education in the Fire Service Symposium on October 11–12, 2008, in Nashville, Tenn. With the changes in technology and learning styles of the typical firefighter, instructors are challenged to incorporate technology and distance education concepts in the classroom. This symposium provides fire service instructors an introduction to distance education concepts in an up-close and personal way, featuring experts in the field who are in tune with the specific needs of volunteer and combination departments. The event is priced right and a must for all fire service instructors who want to remain

current. Go to the [ISFSI Symposium website](#) for full details and registration.

### **Fire Sprinklers Save Lives**

Check out [Firehouse.Com](#) and join Vina Drennan, Amy Acton, Bonnie Woodruff, Chief Dan Jones and Chief Ron Siarnicki as they take a look at America's fire problem and explore opportunities to learn from past tragedies. The stories of Vina, Amy and Bonnie, advocates for "[Common Voices](#)," an organization of burn survivors and family members of burn victims, bring to life the message that "fire sprinklers save lives" and highlight the need for cooperation and collaboration in working to effect change on our nation's fire problem:

- Reflections on the fire that claimed the life of Capt. John Drennan in 1994 and the Chapel Hill fire that claimed young Ben Woodruff's life in 1996 bring to the forefront the need for fire sprinklers and what happens when they aren't present.
- Amy Acton discusses how it is for family members who survive a fire and adds the burn-survivor piece to this powerful, hour-long podcast.
- Chief Siarnicki makes the connection to the Everyone Goes Home program, Life Safety Initiative #15, and highlights the firefighter aspect of this topic.
- Chief Jones adds a first-person account of how the fire chief needs to be an advocate for sprinklers.

To learn more about [Common Voices](#), visit their website; in the meantime, [meet three of the advocates through the podcast available now!](#)

### **Best Funding Practices Needed During Difficult Financial Times**

VCOS Board Member Chief Jim Wilson needs your assistance to write an article that will help all of us! If you have effective funding practices, success stories or suggestions on how to get through difficult financial times, please contact him at [jwilson@mariposacounty.org](mailto:jwilson@mariposacounty.org) or call him at 209-966-4330.

Jim will be writing an article that will be published in a nationally recognized magazine, with excerpts to be posted on the [VCOS website](#). Your best practices are needed to help educate other volunteer and combination fire departments!

### **NVFC Launches Health and Fitness Advocate Pilot Program**

The NVFC Heart-Healthy Firefighter Program, in partnership with L&T Health and Fitness, is launching a new Health and Fitness Advocate initiative. This program is designed to combat the leading cause of line-of-duty deaths—heart attack—by creating health and fitness advocates within fire/EMS departments. Fire and EMS personnel who are interested in health and fitness and have the ability to lead and motivate others are sought to take part in one of two Health and Fitness Advocate workshops. Participation is limited to no more than two individuals from each department and individuals should have the support of department leadership.

The two-day workshops are free of charge and will be held at NVFC headquarters in Greenbelt, Md., just outside Washington, D.C. The workshops will focus on the basic principles behind developing a sound health and fitness program and train first responders to become advocates within their department. As health and fitness advocates, they will encourage and motivate their fellow fire and emergency personnel to adopt heart-healthy behaviors.

To register, submit the [registration form](#), available at [www.healthy-firefighter.org](http://www.healthy-firefighter.org). Space is limited, so register today!

### **Firefighter Injury Project**

Compelling Technologies, Inc., [www.compellingtechnologies.com](http://www.compellingtechnologies.com), is working on a firefighter injury project seeking to identify the causes, events and attitudes that lead to sprains and strains to firefighters. This type of injury is the leading cause of career-ending injuries to firefighters. CTI would like to interview chiefs of volunteer fire agencies who have three or fewer full-time employees. If you meet that criteria and could commit to a telephone interview lasting about 60 minutes, please email your contact information to [rob@compellingtechnologies.com](mailto:rob@compellingtechnologies.com). The results of this study will lead to a technology-oriented training resource for fire service use and hopefully will reduce the number of injuries that disrupt firefighter's service to the public.

### **National Fire Academy Training Opportunities**

There is still space available for the following NFA course at the National Emergency Training Center in Emmitsburg,

Md.:

**Course #R816 - Community Education Leadership  
September 14–19, 2008**

To qualify for this course, you must be a coordinator of your organization's public or community safety-education function.

For more information, visit [www.usfa.dhs.gov/nfa/](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/nfa/) or contact the Admissions Office at [netc-admissions@dhs.gov](mailto:netc-admissions@dhs.gov) or 301-447-1035. Completed applications may be faxed to 301-447-1441. If interested, apply immediately! All vacancies are filled on a first-come, first-served basis and qualified by using the Student Selection Criteria listed on their website: [www.usfa.dhs.gov/nfa/](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/nfa/).

Note: The NFA policy of only one stipend-supported trip per fiscal year remains. However, a qualified individual may seek to participate without stipend assistance. Please indicate with your application that you are aware of this restriction when you apply for the course.

**Rising Cost of Fuel Affecting Volunteer Fire Departments**

In response to concerns raised by the membership, Chief Tim Wall and the VCOS leadership are examining best practices and long-term solutions to help fire departments deal with the increasing price of fuel. Between June 2003 and June 2008, regular gas prices have risen 171% and diesel prices have risen 229%. VCOS will be establishing a committee to review how we can advise fire departments to use their fuel more efficiently and what else they can do to conserve fuel and energy, thus reducing costs to their departments. Watch for an announcement in early August asking for members who would be knowledgeable in this area and interested in working on the committee.

In Congress, Senator Robert P. Casey (D-Pa.), Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.), Senator Bernard Sanders (D-Vt.), and Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ) introduced legislation to mitigate the effect of rising gas prices on volunteer fire departments. The Supporting America's Volunteer Emergency Services (SAVES) Act of 2008 (S. 3237) would establish a new grant program at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to help volunteer fire companies struggling with fuel costs.

Under the SAVES Act, HUD would set a baseline for gas and diesel prices in each of the country's five petroleum districts, using 2007 price data. After volunteer fire departments submit their gas and diesel receipts, HUD would provide a grant for 75% of the difference between how much they paid for the fuel and how much the same amount would have cost at 2007 baseline prices. This legislation is being reviewed by the IAFC's Government Relations staff.

In addition, Firehouse.com is collecting information on how the rising fuel prices are affecting the fire service before publishing a report. If you would like to contribute your thoughts, data or comments on this issue that is impacting all of us, please send an email to Pete Matthews of Firehouse.com ([peter.matthews@cygnusb2b.com](mailto:peter.matthews@cygnusb2b.com)) or call 651-797-2648 no later than July 31.

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