

The 136th Annual FASNY Convention 2008 Re-Cap

in Rochester

The Opening Ceremonies for the 136TH Annual FASNY Convention

Hundreds of firefighters from across the state gathered for FASNY's 136th annual Convention at Rochester's Clarion Riverside Hotel, August 19th – 22nd. The keynote speaker, a former 20-year member of Congress and former volunteer fire chief, urged those in attendance to make it a “top priority to take advantage of technology” and use it “to protect our firefighters and the lives and property they protect.”

Curt Weldon proposed the creation of a federal fire research center at Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida, where a similar facility already exists. He cited the Navy's adoption of the thermal imaging camera 25 years before the fire service did, to locate fire victims or the extension of fire. Weldon, a former 20-year Republican representative from Marcusville, PA, also cited the use by the Air Force of the unmanned aerial vehicle to locate victims of hurricane Katrina.

Weldon said \$5 billion has been allocated to equip and train firefighters: New York State tops the recipient list with \$200 million disbursed in 2,400 federal fire act grants. He called the volunteer fire service the heart and soul of America.

Other speakers included the new state fire service coordinator, former Rochester fire chief Floyd Madison, as well as the New York State Secretary of State Lorraine Cortes-Vazquez who warned against the dangers of novelty cigarette lighters, which can be dangerous in the hands of children.

Outgoing FASNY President Michael P. Wutz of Williamsville, Erie County, stressed the Convention's theme of volunteer and partnerships, while incoming President Thomas J. Cuff, Jr. said he would continue to push for residential fire sprinklers.

The Convention opened with a salute to the American flag, featuring the color guard of the Rochester Protectives, a unique volunteer fire service corps which observed its 150th anniversary on August 23rd.



Keynote speaker Curt Weldon, former member of congress and volunteer firefighter, gives a rousing speech.



President Michael P. Wutz gives keynote speaker Curt Weldon a token of appreciation.

Opening Ceremonies



At the opening ceremonies of the 136th annual Convention in Rochester, President Michael P. Wutz looks on as Vice President Thomas J. Cuff, Jr. and Second Vice President David Jacobowitz remove the old FASNY logo in a presentation, unveiling the new FASNY look.



Secretary of State Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez praises the work of the volunteer fire service at the opening ceremony.



State Fire Administrator Floyd A. Madison discusses continued support of the volunteer fire service.



Deputy Director Frank Tabert of the New York State Department of Homeland Security encourages the volunteer fire service to remain diligent.



President of the FASNY Federal Credit Union John P. Tucker delivers his report to the membership of FASNY.



There were many items up for discussion on the floor of this year's Convention.



Ed Tase invites the FASNY membership to attend the 137th annual FASNY Convention next year in Niagara Falls.

Firefighter of the Year Award



Captain John Ippolito, Jr. and Second Lieutenant Edward Kunz

This year, FASNY presented the Firefighter of the Year Award to Captain John Ippolito, Jr. and Second Lieutenant Edward Kunz of the Bay Shore Fire Department, Suffolk County. This year marked the third year in a row – and the fourth time in five years – that FASNY has given the Firefighter of the Year Award to Suffolk County firefighters.

Captain Ippolito and Second Lieutenant Kunz were selected for their heroic rescue of a Bay Shore resident during a house fire last year.

On September 15th, 2007 at approximately 14:20 hours, Bay Shore Fire Department was alerted to a house fire. Suffolk County Police advised Chief Bryan Butler, who was already on the scene, that a person was trapped inside the home; there were heavy flames and intense heat. Captain Ippolito, who was First Lieutenant at the time, and Second Lieutenant Kunz entered the front door through a wall of flames to the hallway, only to be met by more flames and thick toxic smoke, according to Chief Butler. Captain Ippolito, a third-generation volunteer with the Bay Shore Fire Department, and Second Lieutenant Kunz, a fifth-generation volunteer with the department, quickly realized that the bedroom was the only possible location where the occupant would be trapped. Immediately, Captain Ippolito and Second Lieutenant Kunz performed the difficult task of breaching the adjoining wall of the bedroom.

Without the benefit of a thermal imaging camera, they used low-profile techniques to enter the bedroom, where Captain Ippolito and Second Lieutenant Kunz located a male victim unconscious and badly burned. Without hesitation, they quickly removed the victim through the breached wall that they had entered and then back through the fully-engulfed living room.

Captain Ippolito and Second Lieutenant Kunz carried the victim out of the burning home and onto a safe area outside, where Captain Ippolito began mouth-to-mouth rescue breathing while Second Lieutenant Kunz prepared to assist with chest compressions, if needed. According to Chief Butler, their hard work and heroic efforts allowed them to revive the severely injured and lifeless victim. The victim made a full recovery at the time, and later died of natural causes.



Fire Service Community Achievement Award: Thomas P. Sullivan

FASNY awarded veteran firefighter Thomas P. Sullivan of Monroe, Orange County, with the 2008 Fire Service Community Achievement Award for contributions made to his community during his 30-plus years with the Mombasha Fire Company.

Sullivan joined Mombasha Fire Company in 1975, serving as president of the fire company from 1978 to 1980 before becoming chief of the Monroe Fire Department in 1989.

Awards

EMS

Provider of the Year Award

Chief Mark W. Gilson

FASNY presented the EMS Provider of the Year Award to Chief Mark W. Gilson of the Olcott Volunteer Fire Company, Niagara County, for a rescue performed on August 4th, 2007. Responding to an emergency call of a possible drowning in Lake Ontario, Chief Gilson arrived at the scene in his personal vehicle along with an additional firefighter. They saw the victim floating face down in the water approximately 75 yards off shore.

Chief Gilson donned his personal floatation device (PFD) and gave his throw bag to yet another firefighter who had arrived on the scene. He then instructed the other firefighter to stand on shore in line with the victim, to keep a visual on her and to not allow anyone else in the water without a PFD. Chief Gilson then began swimming out toward the victim, who was floating face down in the water. He immediately turned the victim over and began swimming with her back towards the shore.

By this time, additional personnel had arrived on scene. As he approached the shore with the victim, Chief Gilson grabbed the throw bag that was tossed to him, and he and the victim were pulled the rest of the way onto shore. Once there, Mark carried the victim up onto the beach, immediately assessed her and determined that she was in full cardiac arrest. He began rescue breathing while Randy Szlusta of Miller Hose Fire Company began chest compressions. They continued CPR until the advanced life support equipment was readied. At that point, Chief Gilson intubated the victim and the rescue team began ventilating her via ET tube. She was then placed on a cardiac monitor and the team started warm IVs.

Upon arrival at the hospital the victim was transferred over to the ER staff. She was eventually transferred to another hospital for further treatment and monitoring, and currently she has made a full recovery.



After 32 years of service, Sullivan remains an active member of the fire department; he is currently Mombasha's health officer, a deputy chief, and chairman of the Death Benefits and Scholarship committees.

He also serves as vice president of the Orange County Firefighter's Museum Board of Directors, is a life member of the Orange County Volunteer Firemen's Association, honorary member of the Central Valley Fire Company, eighth president and past chairman of the Board of Directors for Hospice of Orange and Sullivan Counties, and

a member of the Board of Directors for the Orange County Chamber of Commerce.

"Each year, we present this award to someone who is an outstanding member of his or her volunteer fire department and community," said Tom Perkins, chairman of the FASNY Fire Service Community Achievement Award Committee. "Thomas Sullivan is the perfect candidate to receive this type of recognition. He has devoted so many years of his life to the fire service and is heavily involved in various organizations. Thomas has truly made a positive impact in his community."

Awards

continued



Fire Safety Educator of the Year Award: David Bowen

FASNY named David Bowen, a 35-year veteran firefighter with the Vischer Ferry Volunteer Fire Company, Fire Safety Educator of the Year for his efforts to educate students about fire prevention and life safety.

“For more than 30 years, David Bowen has committed himself to teaching children about basic fire safety, from ‘Stop Drop and Roll’ to home escape plans,” said Thomas J. Cuff, Jr., past president of FASNY. “By imparting this information to generations of students, David and his colleagues have prepared the most vulnerable members of our community to deal with – and survive – potentially life-threatening situations. His contributions to society are invaluable, and we proudly name David Bowen our 2008 Fire Safety Educator of the Year.”

David was submitted as a candidate of this prestigious award by Zachary Zambri, President of Vischer Ferry Volunteer Fire Company, where Bowen has been an active firefighter since March 1973. He was chief of department from 1986 to 1988, and has served as commissioner for the Vischer Ferry Fire District since 1989. Bowen also serves with the Town of Clifton Park’s Emergency Services Advisory Board, Fire Prevention Program and the Community Emergency Response Team.

In 1974, Bowen and a group of firefighters made their first-ever fire prevention presentation. Since then, Bowen and his colleagues have taught basic fire prevention and life safety to a total of approximately 4,200 students, from kindergarten through fifth grade, at seven different schools.



Teacher of the Year Award: Ann Chestnut

FASNY presented the Teacher of the Year Award to Ann Chestnut, a kindergarten teacher at St. Mary’s School in Canton, St. Lawrence County. Chestnut, a resident of Louisville, NY, was recognized for her efforts to educate her students about fire safety.

“Ms. Chestnut takes the time to teach her kids lessons that could help them and their families save their lives, and we hope others look to her as an inspiration,” said Gary Hunt, chairman of FASNY’s Fire Prevention and Life Safety Committee. “Just like reading, writing and arithmetic, basic fire safety should be a part of every school curriculum, and we applaud Ms. Chestnut’s efforts.”

At 16 years of age, Chestnut suffered the loss of a friend during a house fire. The tragic experience left her very aware of the ramifications of fire catastrophes. From that moment on, she vowed that fire prevention would become part of her daily life. She continues to maintain that promise in her teachings at St. Mary’s School in Canton. She ensures that the students under her supervision are knowledgeable on what to do in case of a fire emergency.

Chestnut encourages and promotes fire safety education in her kindergarten classroom. She discusses and practices the school fire drill with the new students as part of their first day. During fire prevention week in October, Chestnut invites Dan Aldous, educational liaison from the Canton Fire Department to come speak and interact with the children. Each child is asked to go to their homes and locate fire detectors. The young students are taught the significance of “Stop, Drop, and Roll” as well as how to properly exit a room that is filled with smoke. They are also instructed on the crucial importance of 911 and informed on the procedures of how and when to use this system to save themselves and others. Chestnut concludes fire prevention week with a field trip to the Canton fire station for more demonstrations and fire safety education tips. Her entire lesson plan regarding fire safety education is creative and age-appropriate for young children.

Monte Carlo Night
Everyone’s a Winner

By Gordy Kotars, FASNY Public Relations Committee

The Monroe County Convention Committee hosted a successful “Monte Carlo Night” during the Convention. There were no “high-stakes” games since the whole evening was purely for fun, with a few door prizes and free refreshments for the duration of the event.

Training and Education

Two Ex-FDNY Members Speak on Leadership in the Fire Service



Ex-FDNY members Paul Hashagen and Bruce Newbery discuss fire service leadership.

In their comprehensive address on leadership in the fire service, the “tag team” of Paul Hashagen and Bruce Newbery brought their years of service in the FDNY and as Ex-Chiefs of the Freeport Fire Department to bear, bringing a unique perspective to the FASNY members in attendance.

Paul noted that leaders are not born, they are made. That alone should be a signal to anyone who aspires to a leadership role that education and training are essential. No one should think that if they seek help from people who have done their homework and are willing to share the knowledge they have gained by experience and education, it is a sign of weakness. In actuality, it is a sign of someone willing to acknowledge that they weren't born knowing everything.

As Paul and Bruce took turns emphasizing important points such as knowing your job and being able to do it, they interjected the humor necessary to relieve the inherent stress as an officer in the fire service, be it paid or volunteer. I don't use the word career to describe a firefighter who takes home a pay check for their service because I know many who have made a career of serving their hometown's volunteer fire service as have Paul Hashagen and Bruce Newbery.

On Recruitment and Retention



Executive Vice President of VFIS Dr. William F. Jenaway talks about the importance of recruitment and retention in the fire service.

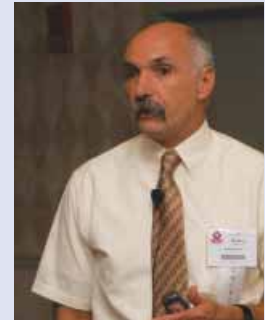
Dr. William F. Jenaway, the executive vice president of the VFIS, once again detailed his concerns to us about the survival of the volunteer system of firefighting and EMS. He also came with possible measures to counter the decline of new membership. He pointed out that young people who consider becoming one of us have different expectations than our fathers did. At one time, a pool table, a bunch of friends and the pride of volunteering was all a guy could want out of life.

There are many other options for who would be our next generation, and we should recognize that fewer people in general are joining organizations. There are more people bowling today than ever before, but not in leagues. A book mentioned by Dr. Jenaway called “Bowling Alone” by Roger Putnam gives some insight into why this is happening.

Hours of mandated training take a considerable chunk of time out of a young person's life. That couples with the fact that fewer “workers” are available to bring excitement to the mix. There needs to be something else to attract and keep new members.

He suggests making the firehouse a more attractive place for members. Training during this time doubles the value of time spent. Putting gym equipment for members in-house, or if that's not feasible, a membership at the local gym to promote fitness and health also doubles the value of time spent. Being flexible about required minimum percentages and meeting attendance might remove some of the stumbling blocks in the way of a successful recruitment and retention program.

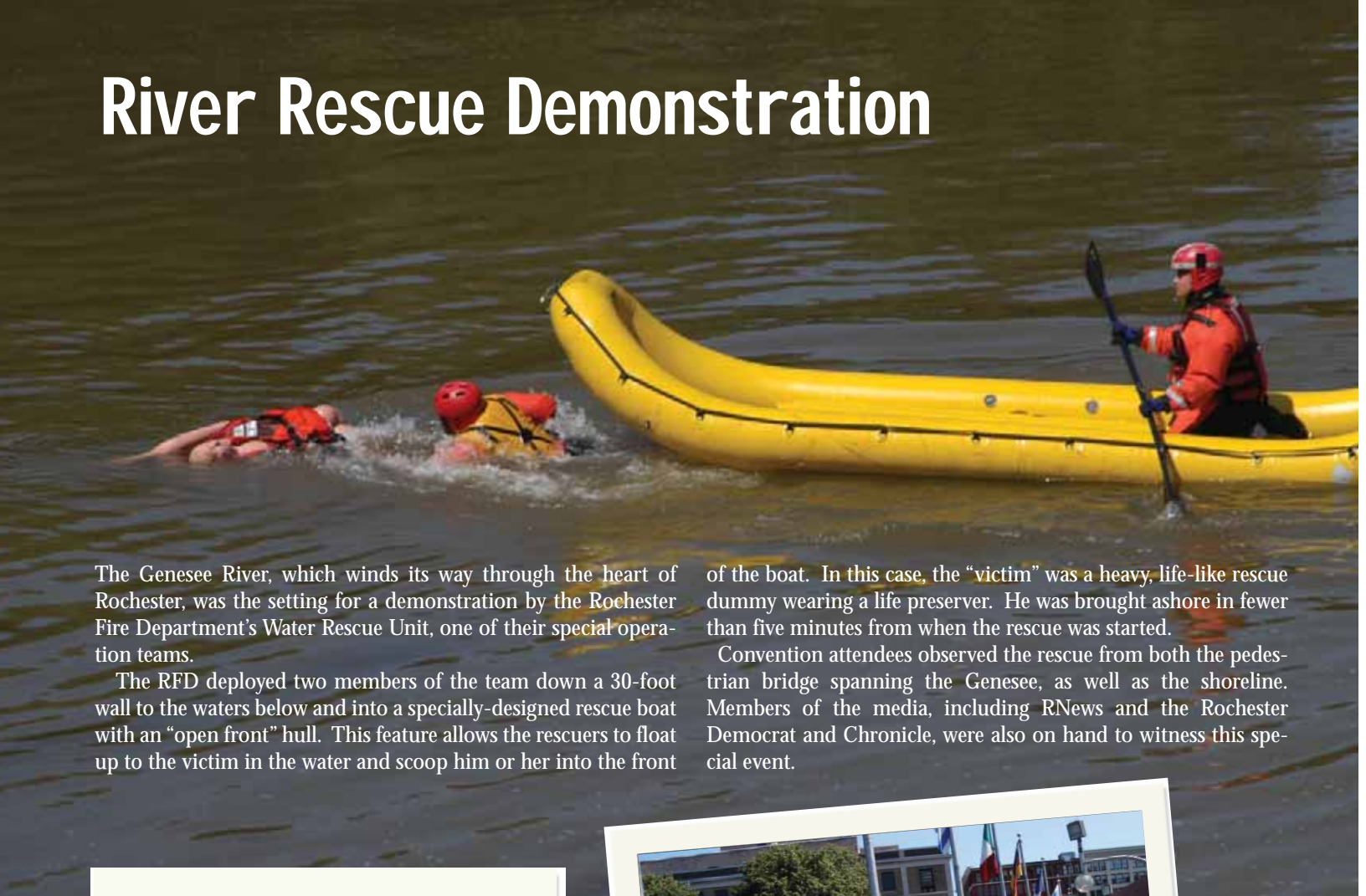
I thought one of his suggestions was particularly inspired: make the fire department the “welcome wagon.” Bring a smoke detector, emergency number stickers for phones, location of the nearest hospital, etc., **and** an application for membership.



President and senior instructor at SAFE-IR Inc. Robert Athanas speaks about thermal imagers.



River Rescue Demonstration

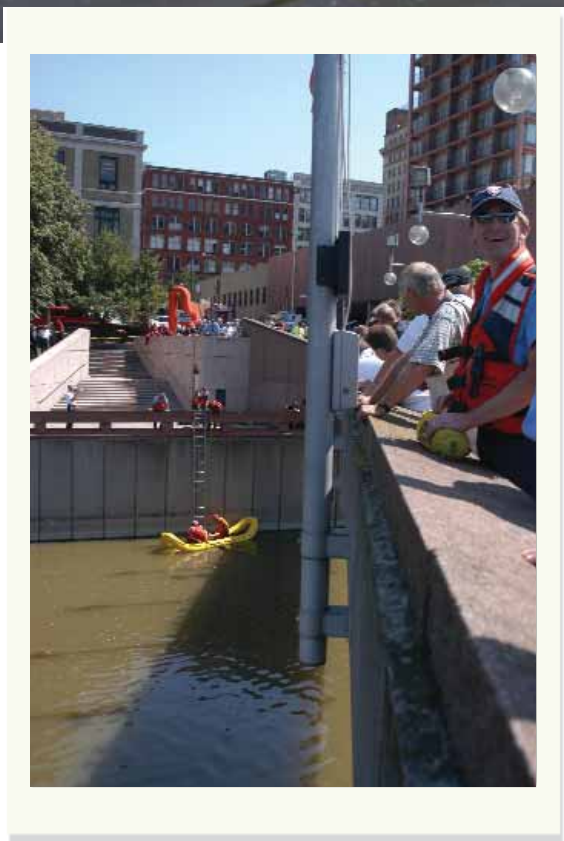


The Genesee River, which winds its way through the heart of Rochester, was the setting for a demonstration by the Rochester Fire Department's Water Rescue Unit, one of their special operation teams.

The RFD deployed two members of the team down a 30-foot wall to the waters below and into a specially-designed rescue boat with an "open front" hull. This feature allows the rescuers to float up to the victim in the water and scoop him or her into the front

of the boat. In this case, the "victim" was a heavy, life-like rescue dummy wearing a life preserver. He was brought ashore in fewer than five minutes from when the rescue was started.

Convention attendees observed the rescue from both the pedestrian bridge spanning the Genesee, as well as the shoreline. Members of the media, including RNews and the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, were also on hand to witness this special event.



Firefighter Games

Driver Challenge Finale



The 2008 FASNY Firefighter Games were held at the Monroe County Public Safety Training Facility, a few miles away from the site of FASNY's Convention in downtown Rochester. While the heat outdoors was a little stifling, some spectators were able to take in both days of competition from the training facility's air-conditioned observation deck.

The games began on August 21st with the debut of the putting contest, proceeds from which went toward the FASNY Scholarship Fund. Over \$400 was raised during this event with a total of 79 participants. Members of the Central New York Firemen's Association, Oriskany firefighters more specifically, dominated the outcome of this event claiming first, second and third place. Winners of the putting contest were: first place: Paul Riehem, second place: Eric Rothdiener, and third place: Mike Hughes. Due to the tremendous response and participation, this event will be held again at the 2008 FASNY Legislative Conference later this month. So if you didn't participate at the Convention, please plan on taking part in the competition the next time around!

The FASNY Firefighter Games Driver Challenge summer season came to a close at the Convention on August 22nd. It was well attended with participation at an all time high; 24 participants were involved. During this event, there was also a fun walk along the beautiful Genesee River with 28 participants. Winners of the driver challenge were: first place: Don Winchell of Angelica Hose Company with a course time of 4:23; second place: Kevin Erdmann of Merrick Hook and Ladder with five minutes flat; and third place: Robert Newbert Jr. of Farmersville Fire Department with 5:12.

With his first-place victory, Winchell earned a place in the finals against the sectional winners, where he would take on and prevail over the sectional champs. Winchell came in first with a time of 4:04, while second place went to Central's Mike Hughes, with a time of 4:30, and third place went to Josh Graham from Southwestern, with a time of 4:57.

After the games, participants were invited to tour the Monroe County Public Safety Training Facility. FASNY would like to extend its thanks to our hosts for being so gracious. A special thanks goes out to members of various FASNY committees who generously offered their time and effort, especially to Robert Faugh for all of his hard work organizing this event. Everyone, from participants to spectators, had a great time, and we look forward to next year's competitions in Niagara Falls. We'd also like to express our sincere thanks to ESIP: without them, we would not be able to put on this competition.

Upcoming Firefighter Games Events:

October 25th, 2008: A "firehouse chili and homemade breads" themed cook-off at the 2008 FASNY Legislative Conference at the Holiday Inn in Albany at 4:00 p.m.

February 13th-15th, 2009: Winter Games in Cortland. More details will be made available in upcoming months of this magazine.

We look forward to seeing everyone at these events.

FASNY Election Results

President Thomas J. Cuff, Jr.

A longtime Levittown resident and volunteer firefighter, Thomas J. Cuff, Jr. was elected by unanimous vote on the final day of FASNY's 136th annual Convention in Rochester. His fire service career began in 1953, when he joined the Garden City Fire Department. He joined the Levittown Fire Department in 1961, serving as captain of Ladder Co. No. 1, later becoming a commissioner of the Levittown Fire District for 20 years.

Thomas J. Cuff, Jr. has also served as president of the Nassau County Volunteer Firemen's Association, the South Shore Volunteer Fire Departments, the County's Association of Fire Districts and the Southern New York Volunteer Firemen's Association.

His wife, Jane, and three of their four daughters joined Cuff during the installation ceremony.



First Vice President David Jacobowitz

Past Chief David Jacobowitz, resident of Whitesboro in Oneida County, succeeded Thomas J. Cuff, Jr.

Jacobowitz is a past chief of the Whitesboro Fire Department, serving for 20 years, and has been a member for 37 years. He is a recipient of the New York State Fire Chief's Association's Excellence in Leadership Award. Jacobowitz is also a past president of the Oneida County Fire Chief's Association as well as the Central New York Volunteer Firefighter's Association. He remains active in the National Fire Protection Association's child safety programs.



David Jacobowitz and Joseph E. Kelly being sworn in as First Vice President and Second Vice President respectively.

Second Vice President Joseph Kelly

A resident of the hamlet of Walkill in Ulster County, Joseph E. Kelly has long been a firefighter, chief and commissioner as well as a member of his hometown's volunteer ambulance squad.

Kelly is a past president of the Hudson Valley Volunteer Firemen's Association and is the vice-chair of its legislative committee. He has served as past president of the Ulster County Volunteer Firefighter's Association, and he was a two-term councilman on the Town of Shawangunk Town Board. Kelly also served as a medic in the Vietnam War as a member of the 1/7th US Cavalry, First Air Cavalry Division.



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NYS Fire Service Council Pledges Continued Unity to Address Issues Affecting Members of the Fire Service

At the FASNY Convention, members of the New York State Fire Service Council, the umbrella organization comprising the major fire service groups in the empire state, renewed their pledge to continuing their unified approach towards tackling the most pressing issues affecting the volunteer fire service. The pledge will ensure that the concerns of the state's volunteer fire service are heard – and acted on – by local, state and federal officials and policymakers.

“We are here, and we remain unified and prepared to face new challenges for the 100,000 men and women of the volunteer fire service,” said Tom With, Chairman of the New York State Fire Service Council. “Changes in the political and economic climate have compelled us to redouble our efforts to work together as one, to deliver services even more efficiently and effectively.”

The Fire Service Council includes representatives from FASNY, the Association of Fire Districts of the State of New York, the New York State Association of Fire Chiefs, and the New York State Association of Fire Coordinators, along with other fire service groups. This informal panel first met in June during a meeting of NYS AFC's annual conference at Lake George.

“This is an historic moment for the volunteer fire service in New York State,” said Thomas J. Cuff, Jr., President of FASNY. “We are always looking for innovative ways to address the continuing challenges facing our volunteers and our local fire departments. By renewing our pledge to speak with one voice, the members of the New York State Fire Service Council are demonstrating an unwillingness to take on the problems facing the fire service lying down.”

The New York State Fire Service Council and its member organizations have scored recent victories in the New York State Legislature, the most significant being the



FASNY President Thomas J. Cuff, Jr. (far right) joins NYS Fire Service Council Chairman Tom With (center) to make historic announcement during the Convention.

health insurance law, signed last month by Governor David Paterson, which allows volunteer firefighters access to health coverage at reduced costs. Since these plans would be paid for by individual volunteers out of their own pockets, there is no additional financial burden to the taxpayer.

High-priority items for this newly-formed partnership include:

- **Continued support for the Public Safety Officer Benefit program.** Currently, most families of firefighters and EMS personnel who die in the line of duty receive death benefits. However, there remain specific circumstances in which a Line-of-Duty Death “doesn't count” toward death benefit eligibility. Redefining whose families should receive this benefit is a top on the partnership's agenda.
- **Working to find funding sources to help eliminate “unfunded mandates”** by state and federal governments that require – but do not pay for – the procurement of equipment and training by local fire districts.
- **The need to secure dedicated funding, on an annual basis, for firefighter training.**
- **The need to address continuing challenges of member recruitment and retention.**

“The volunteer fire service has always looked for ways to deliver services in a more economical and streamlined fashion,” added With. “Besides the estimated eight

billion in cost savings to taxpayers annually, volunteer departments save approximately 36 billion dollars for localities nationwide. Our message is simple: you cannot cut volunteer departments to cut costs. The New York State Fire Service Council will ensure that our voices are heard in Albany, and all across New York State.”

John LoScalzo, First Vice President of the New York State Association of Fire Districts, added, “Fire districts across the state have worked together on shared services,

joint purchasing and other cost containment procedures for many years. For the districts, the major problem remains the unfunded mandates which call for more equipment, apparatus and training, placing a heavy fiscal burden. The New York State Fire Service Council's renewed commitment to unity across the spectrum will allow us to end these unfunded mandates and keep us on solid financial footing for the sake of the communities we serve.”

William Owen, President of the New York State Association of Fire Chiefs, said “As a fire chief, I know that proper training and the right equipment saves the lives of both volunteer firefighters and civilians. I join my fellow chiefs in working closely with our partner organizations to fight for more dedicated funds for firefighter training and laws that better protect our firefighters and those we serve.”

Kevin Niedermaier of the County Fire Coordinators' Association of the State of New York said, “We are proud of the work that we, as individual organizations, do for the volunteer firefighters of this state. As a unified whole, the members of the New York State Fire Service Council will continue working to secure the resources our fire departments and volunteers need to keep our communities safe.”



The Annual Memorial Service



In memory of those who served in the fire service who are no longer with us.