

114th Oklahoma State Firefighters Association Convention Report

Submitted by Jason T. Smith with an inclusion from the IAFF 2067 website –
<http://www.iaff2067.org>

June 7, 2008 - The Oklahoma State Firefighters Association held its 114th convention June 4-7, 2008 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. This OSFA Conference themed, "First In Last out 343 911 Never Forget," honored the memory of fallen emergency personnel from the attack on the Twin Towers, The Pentagon, and the crashed 747 plane in Pennsylvania nearly seven years ago. OSFA President Don Chambers (Tulsa Fire Department), the executive board and staff and the Tulsa Fire Department joined forces to host this five day event.

IAFF Local 2067 representation included: Grant Deason, Dana Cramer, Bobby Anderson, Justin Burrig, Jason Smith, and Nick Terhune.

Wednesday, June 4, 2008

- Convention festivities kicked-off with several activities lasting throughout the day and night. Those activities included: a fishing tournament, held at Ft. Gibson Lake, a golf tournament (Mohawk Golf Course), and hospitality activities hosted by Tulsa Green Country and the Oklahoma City Firefighters Local.
- **Local IAFF 2067 members Grant Deason, Craig Roberts, and Pat Holding along with Retired Oklahoma City Chief Jon Hansen participated in the golf tournament.**
- **Local IAFF 2067 member Dana Cramer also participated. Cramer teamed with Assistant Director of the Pension System Herb Bradshaw.**

Thursday, June 5, 2008

- **A breakfast honoring the past OSFA presidents began the morning. Dana Cramer, OSFA President 1999 and IAFF Local 2067 member, participated.**
- Current OSFA President Don Chambers, Tulsa Fire Department, called the first session to order and the Tulsa Honor Guard presented the colors.
- A memorial service honored the memory of Oklahoma's fallen firefighters with the Last Alarm. Families of deceased firefighters and convention participants paid respects with silence as 3rd Vice President Bert Norton, Midwest City Fire Department and 2nd Vice President, Les Foughty, Oklahoma City Fire Department Fire Department, read the names aloud. 1st Vice President Ray Hammons, Tahlequah Fire Department, struck the bell after each name.

- The Norman Fire Department suffered the loss of four members in the past twelve months. Those deceased are:
 1. Charles D. Hill (Retired in 1979)
 2. Robert L. Russell (Retired in 1988)
 3. Harold K. Wood (Retired in 1959)
 4. Former Norman Fire Chief Zona Clark (Retired in 1973)
- Larry Bowles, Tulsa Fire Department Public Information Officer delivered the invocation.
- Senator Kenneth Corn addressed the congregation. Senator Corn is the Democratic Caucus Chair and the Chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Public Safety and Judiciary. He also serves on the Criminal Jurisprudence, Education, Finance, and Retirement and Insurance committees. Corn's message pleaded for firefighters to fight for their needs in the coming fiscal year. Additionally, Corn warned firefighters of "politician promises" and encouraged fighters to hold politicians accountable. Corn, an Oklahoma Senator from District 4, which includes Sequoyah and Le Flore County served in the House from 1998-2002. He was elected to the State Senate in 2002 at the age of 25, the second youngest senator in the state's history.
- Tulsa Fire Chief Allen LaCroix welcomed convention participants.
- OSFA President Don Chambers recognized special guests including those who serve on OSFA boards.
- **IAFF Local 2067 boasted four (4) OSFA Committee members, the most present of any delegation.**
 - **Grant Deason- Chairman of the Educational Committee**
 - **Dana Cramer- Legislative Committee, Memorial Committee, Credits Committee, Museum Board, OSFA Ambassador**
 - **Jason Smith- Safety and Health Committee**
 - **Nick Terhune- Financial Committee**

Upon session adjournment, participants enjoyed a Poker Run, and social mixers and a picnic provided by the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA).

- Thursday's activities reached a crescendo with music and dancing at the historic Cain's Ballroom. Proceeds from this activity went to the family of Tulsa Firefighter Stacey Ward. Ward was hurt in a motorcycle accident December 21, 2007. Ward's injuries have confined him to a wheelchair. This fundraising effort netted \$9500.

Friday, June 6, 2008

- OSFA President Don Chambers (Tulsa) called the meeting to order.
- Danny Lynchard, Tulsa Fire Department Chaplain, delivered the invocation.
- Lt. Governor Jari Askins addressed the convention crowd. Askins message centered on image. Additionally, Askins presented a challenge to hold politicians accountable. Furthermore, Askins triumphantly announced that there will “never be a tie concerning fire services issues. Because you can count on me to always break the tie favorably.”
- Representatives Joe Dorman and Eric Proctor offered the OSFA their support.

Destry Horton Burn Center

Jeri Thomas, the mother of Destry Horton, Chickasha Firefighter killed in the line of duty, spoke about renovations to the Integris Burn Unit. The proposed renovation will result in four Burn Center ICU rooms with a central nurse’s station providing better work-flow for staff, more efficient visual monitoring of patients, space for advanced medical equipment, and improved accommodation for the patient’s family. This renovation will make the current unit state of the art. The Noble Foundation has donated \$500,000. Mrs. Thomas challenged firefighters to help raise the other \$500,000. The burn center will be named after Horton.

Muscular Dystrophy Association

Andrea Poe (MDA) reported that the Fill the Boot campaign for 2007 collectively raised \$972,926. **The Norman Fire Department raised \$24,424 in 2007.**

Shelly Henderson, mother of MDA’s 2008 Goodwill Ambassador Zack Henderson presented their family’s testimony of how MDA and the firefighter’s efforts have touched their lives. Zack, 15, is stricken with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. This disease eventually robs the victim of all muscular strength and control. In Zack’s case, he quit walking around nine (9) years of age and doctors predict he will lose his upper body strength within a few years. Sufferers usually die in their late teens or early 20s. Mrs. Henderson expressed joy in how MDA has helped provide Zack with a full life. Zack was able to play four (4) years of organized T-Ball and Coach Pitch and most recently showed a lamb despite being confined to a wheel chair.

- Reports presented to the delegation included: State Fire Marshal, Firefighters Pension System, Legislative Report, Fallen and Living Firefighters Memorial, Oklahoma Fire Chiefs Association, Oklahoma Retired Firefighters Association, Professional Fire Fighters of Oklahoma,

Fire Service Training, Museum Report, Firefighters Clown Society and the presentation of the Pete and Lela Stavros Scholarship

David Bain Award

OSFA Executive Director Chris Bain presented the David Bain award to Herb Bradshaw. David Bain, a former OSFA President (1995) and Chief (Midwest City), was instrumental in starting the leg work on the current Fallen Firefighter's Memorial. **The first ever David Bain award winner was IAFF Local 2067 member Dana Cramer in 2005.** Bain died of cancer

Memorial Report

First Vice-President Ray Hammons delivered the Memorial Report. A new Centennial Clock has been installed and the granite is in place. By October 2008, over three thousand (3,000) names will appear on the wall.

Second Report of Nominating Committee

Candidates for 3rd Vice President addressed the crowd. Jack Ellington, a longtime EMS person and volunteer firefighter from Bridge Creek and David Thompson, a self-employed volunteer firefighter from Slaughterville spoke. **The Local IAFF 2067 delegates decided to support David Thompson.**

Council on Firefighter Training (COFT)

COFT addresses the critical state of firefighter training with the first-ever Training Task Force for Oklahoma. Access the full Task Force Report at www.COFT-Oklahoma.org.

Pension and Retirement System

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2007, total assets of the System increased 16.5%. Return on investments for the System equaled 16%. The funded status, based on GASB No. 25 liabilities and on actuarial value of assets, increased from 58% to 61.6%. Access the complete report at www.okfirepen.state.ok.us.

Fire Service Training

(Per Firehouse.com and www.iaff2067.org)

FST Director Ralph Brown addressed the recent death following live burn activities at OSU-FST in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

The fallen firefighter has been identified as Russell Thomas "Rusty Gains" Topping, a member of the Barnsdall Volunteer Fire Department.

At approximately 6:45 p.m., about 45 minutes after a group of 25 firefighters had finished a live fire training exercise at the facility located in Stillwater, the 28-year-old firefighter was found collapsed and unresponsive. Fellow firefighters began to administer recovery efforts on Topping, who was then transported by Stillwater crews. Topping was pronounced dead at the Stillwater Medical Center. The Oklahoma State Firefighters Association is currently conducting an investigation.

Topping was participating in the "Fire Fighter I Outreach Academy," a program offered by OSU that gives rural and volunteer firefighters the opportunity to gain accredited "Fire Fighter I" credentials for little or no cost. The group completed a majority of their training in Dewey, Okla., but was in Stillwater to complete the live burn portion. This is the first training-related fatality in the more than 75-year history of the fire service training program at OSU. "This is a real tragedy," Spokesman Gary Shutt said. "Oklahoma State University extends its thoughts and prayers to the family and to his fellow firefighters. OSU Fire Service Training personnel are devastated by this loss."

Brown has asked for an investigation into Topping's death. Additionally, Brown has suspended further live burn activities at OSU-FST until the conclusion of the investigation.

Museum Report

Oklahoma State Firefighters Museum Director Mike "Rookie" Billingsly explained that customers may order merchandise from the Museum online including Red Books. If ordered through the Museum, IFSTA sends a portion of the profits back to OSFA. Doing so, does NOT increase the price of merchandise and the order arrives at the buyer's door step in just 2-3 days.

- Friday evening finished with a "Business Casual" dress banquet. Items on the buffet included salad, chicken, green beans, rice, and rolls. Following the banquet, door prizes were distributed and "The Uninvited Guest Band" entertained.
- A helmet painted by IAFF Local 2067 member Ronny Davenport was the featured item for auction. This helmet sporting a predominantly red color with the theme "911. 343. Never Forget" painted on the side. OSFA President Don Chambers (Tulsa) purchased the helmet for \$1,000.

OSFA SAFER Grant Report

The SAFER grant awarded to the OSFA was for the Recruitment and Retention (of volunteer firefighters) activity. The OSFA has leased 15 billboards throughout Oklahoma AND placed display advertising in over 185 newspapers in order to convey this simple message... "Volunteer" and, "Be an Oklahoma Firefighter".

The OSFA SAFER grant seeks to recruit from the public to augment the efforts of fire departments statewide.

Also, a training stipend is available to active, volunteer firefighters who submit an application to participate. There is a stipend for food, lodging and fuel depending upon the event or activity.

A Firefighter Wellness initiative is also funded by this grant whereby the Fire Chief may apply to be reimbursed the costs associated with an entry-level physical for volunteer firefighters.

Saturday, June 6, 2008

- President Don Chambers called the meeting to order.
- Retired Tulsa Fire Department Pastor Gary Rogers delivered the invocation.
- Les Foughty, Oklahoma City, invited firefighters to attend the 116th OSFA Convention in (2010) in Oklahoma City.
- Ray Hammon, Tahlequah, invited everyone to attend next year's OSFA Convention in Tahlequah, Oklahoma.
- This session, reserved for legislation discussion, featured the presentation of one (1) voting resolutions plus the election of the 3rd Vice President. Resolutions and voting results are listed below:

Constitutional Resolution #06-02

RESOLUTION FAILED

To: Oklahoma State Firefighters Association
Re: Convention Constitution and By-Laws Resolution

WHEREAS, the Oklahoma Retired Firefighters Association is to support the efforts of the Oklahoma State Firefighters Association;

WHEREAS, the objectives of the Oklahoma Retired Firefighters Association are to assist the Oklahoma State Firefighters Association in pursuit of their goals;

WHEREAS the Oklahoma Retired Firefighters Association is to cooperate with Oklahoma State Firefighters Association Executive Board and Executive Director

in serving the best interests of active, volunteer, retired and widowed firefighters of Oklahoma;

WHEREAS members of the Oklahoma Retired Firefighters Association have many years experience and history that would aid in the debate and discussion made by the Executive Board of the Oklahoma State Firefighters Association;

WHEREAS Oklahoma Retired Firefighters Association contributes financially to Oklahoma State Firefighters Association and has no vote on the Executive Board;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Article 4, Section 4, shall be amended to read, "One additional person shall serve as liaison officer on the Executive Board, the President or his designee from the Oklahoma Retired Firefighters Association (ORFA), being recognized as the liaison officer. Being recognized as a liaison officer, he therefore, shall have a vote, but not nor proceed through the chairs.

3rd Vice President

Slaughterville Volunteer firefighter David Thompson defeated Jack Ellington of Bridge Creek to become the 3rd Vice President.

President- Ray Hammons- Tahlequah

1st Vice President- Les Foughty, Oklahoma City

2nd Vice President- Bert Norton, Midwest City

ORFA 3rd Vice President

Paul Gallalher, Tulsa, was elected as 3rd Vice President for ORFA.

President- Perry Brinegar- Duncan

1st Vice President- Mike Bower, Midwest City

2nd Vice President- Randy Rose, Oklahoma City