



The  
**COMMUNIQUE**

SPRING 2013

A Publication of the Oregon Fire District Directors Association

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and Affordable Care Act *Page 5*

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**What you should  
know about  
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# The COMMUNIQUE

A publication of the Oregon Fire District Directors Association.

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# An honor and privilege

By Roy Palmer, 2013 OFDDA President



**I consider it an honor and privilege to be elected to serve as your President for 2013. The year is going to be an exciting one as there are so many changes on**

**the horizon and so much to accomplish. First and foremost, the Legislative Session is in full swing. I have been asked to serve on the Legislative Committee of the Special Districts Association of Oregon. The Committee reviews all legislation; and OFDDA will have input into positions taken. In the first weeks of the session, there has been a tremendous amount of activity surrounding public safety legislation:**

**1. HB 2084**, which increases the Fire Insurance Premium tax from 1 percent of property casualty insurance to 1.15, was heard earlier this week; and your staff provided testimony in support. Remember, the Office of State Fire Marshal receives no General Fund dollars and all OSFM programs must be funded through fees or the tax. Due to several factors (decreases in the housing market, previous sweeps by the legislature), the State Fire Marshal has lost 24 percent of its staff. Insurance companies testified as “neutral” on the bill, but later changed to “support” on the records, after the

OSFM indicated that they would be willing to drop the automatic accelerator contained in the bill. The bill did not move and the Chair indicated he would like to meet with OSFM staff and their fiscal analyst. That meeting is in the works. The bill is expected to pass.

**2. HB 2418**, the “Collective Bargaining” bill or “Battalion Chief” bill is moving very fast. OFDDA and OFCA both oppose the bill. The bill would change the definition of “supervisory employee” by adding language that states that a public employee who “merely assigns, transfers, or directs the work of other employees, but does not have the authority to impose economic discipline on those employees, is not a supervisory employee.” This would, of course impact Battalion Chiefs. The bill moved out of Committee the third week of February, and is opposed by OFDDA.

**3. SB 422** was introduced by Rep. Prozanski (D-Lane County) in response to public safety shortages in his district. The bill would allow rural fire protection districts to contract with law enforcement for extra levels of protection or “resident deputies” to cover certain unincorporated areas where law enforcement is not funded or underfunded. OFDDA and OFCA both oppose the bill since neither believes it is the responsibility of the fire service to supply law enforcement services.

**4. The 9-1-1 Legislation** (including several bills addressing the inclusion of pre-paid cell phone users and the extension of the 9-1-1 tax) is the number one issue for the entire fire service. Those bills were posted for hearings in

mid-February and were then immediately taken off the schedule. Hopefully, by the time of this publication, the legislation will be well on the way to passage.

**5. SB 126**, relating to smoke alarms, has been referred to a work group after receiving one hearing. The work group consists of representatives from Building Codes, housing interests, the fire service, and others to work out a compromise bill.

Second, we have decided to make OFDDA outreach a high priority this year. In addition to marshaling our past OFDDA Presidents to act as ambassadors to reach out to both member and non-member fire district Boards, OFDDA Board members will be engaging in fire district Board meetings, Fire Defense Boards, etc., to share information and hear concerns from our Districts.

This fall, OFDDA will host the first ever Fire Service Conference on November 7-9 in Pendleton. With the move away from the joint concept, it will allow us to embrace a new format where we can engage all of our fire service partners and provide an opportunity to hold association meetings, provide joint training, and network with other fire representatives. Our hope is that this new format will allow the Oregon Fire Service Community to become stronger and more united. We are also moving away from the Bend/Seaside rotation to give other communities an opportunity to host our conference. We hope this change meets with membership approval.

I’m looking forward to an exciting year with many “firsts”. Please join me in shaping our future.

## OVFA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## VOLUNTEERS' CORNER



By David Sellers, OVFA President and volunteer with Nestucca Fire and Rescue

As President of the Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association, it is my privilege to represent you in many facets of fire service activities throughout Oregon. Many opportunities come my way as I serve in this capacity: I’m honored to be in a position that allows me to visit fire departments, work with many fire service personnel on committees and task forces that impact the fire service and participate in special events. What I continually see is that we in the fire service are

all about making something better for those we serve.

We give our time and we sacrifice much in our willingness to be better at what we do, to help others with their emergencies and to make our cities, districts and communities better as we do what we do. It has been said that we are family and I believe that with all my heart. It’s why we do what we do and enjoy doing it. It excites me to see how much of what happens in the fire service in Oregon is done by volunteers and I am so proud to represent you “The Volunteer” as you give so much.

I just want to say thank you for what you do. Thank you for being a board member or a support volunteer, for being a firefighter or an officer, or a family member that fills in when we are called to our duties. Thank you to all those in the fire service that support the Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association and help make it possible for our board to serve you and make the fire service better for volunteers in Oregon. Together we will continue to do what we do and do it to the best of our abilities.

Stay safe out there...



# Mandatory Reporting of Abuse and Neglect

By Jeff Sinclair, *Director of Claims Services, SDAO*

All citizens have a responsibility to protect those who cannot protect themselves. This protection is commonly extended to infants, children, the elderly or dependent, those with disabilities and residents of nursing homes, health care facilities, etc. While the State of Oregon, via the Department of Human Services (DHS), has eliminated much of the individual's responsibility for this protection, they ask everyone to report any situation where there is suspected abuse or neglect.

In addition to the request outlined above, many professions are required to report when they have reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect. The

list of mandatory reporters includes but is not limited to all public employees, most medical personnel, emergency medical technicians, school and child care personnel - including teachers, law enforcement, attorneys, firefighters, child and foster care providers. There are both criminal and civil penalties for failure to report suspected abuse and/or neglect. And liability coverage may not extend to these penalties. Therefore, SDAO recommends that all members train their employees in the importance of immediately reporting any suspected abuse or neglect.

*This article is an interpretation of information obtained from the DHS web site - <http://cms.oregon.gov/dhs>*

## To report suspected abuse or neglect

If someone is being hurt or is in immediate danger, call 911.

If there is no immediate danger, contact the local Child Welfare office in your area. Please type the following address into your internet browser to obtain a list of local offices by county: [http://cms.oregon.gov/dhs/children/pages/abuse/cps/cw\\_branches.aspx](http://cms.oregon.gov/dhs/children/pages/abuse/cps/cw_branches.aspx)

Similarly, you can report adult abuse or neglect by contacting the local Department of Human Services office in your area. Please type the following address into your internet browser to obtain a list of local offices by county: <http://cms.oregon.gov/dhs/spwpd/pages/offices.aspx>

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**“Loyal to Our Duty”**

# Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

by Mark Kreutzer, NAEFO President

**NAEFO has been busy these past few months on two national legislative issues, fire service funding and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, (PPACA), AKA Obamacare.**

Congress passed HR 4310 which authorized funding of SAFER and FIRE grants, as well as U.S. Fire Administration. The funds were authorized but not appropriated. There are good things about this bill including funding of major fire service priorities. Unfortunately, the FIRE and SAFER grants would sunset in 2017. There are also new changes to grant recipients and matching funds. Please review the changes and understand the impact to your Fire District if you apply for a grant. Lobby your State members of Congress to ensure passage of this legislation.

Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act has been in place for several months. Many fire service leaders, me included, were mistaken to think that PPACA was concerned only with health care insurance. Health care reform involves an entirely different concept of health care. More emphasis is on prevention, post hospital evaluation and quality of care. All components of the health care field, including fire-based EMS, will be impacted to some degree. The fire service cannot sit back and think it will not be affected. As Elected Officials we need to insure that our Fire Chiefs, EMS personnel and physician advisors have

an understanding of the potential impact on our department and the taxpayers. The greatest impact will be on Fire Departments that provide EMS transport. The scope of the change is too complex to be explained in this update, since every state, county and fire district will be affected differently. I encourage you to contact your County Coordinated Care Organization (CCO) or ACO (Accountable Care Organization), and discuss their thoughts and impact to fire-based EMS. NAEFO will be monitoring any updates or concerns that may impact the fire service. NAEFO is sponsoring a seminar on April 13th at the Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue Training Center in Sherwood, OR. EMS Chief, Mark Stevens, will give a presentation on PPACA and the potential impact on the Fire Service. A registration fee of \$40.00 will include the seminar and lunch, and registration can soon be made through the NAEFO website.

The Congressional Fire Service Caucus recently selected Congressman Dave Reichert, representing the 8th congressional district of Washington, as chairman. Senator Jon Tester of Montana, was named Co-Chairman of the Fire Caucus, assuming the position previously held by Senator Joe Lieberman. Congratulations to these individuals and their Western U.S. connection. In a recent article appearing in USA Today, it was reported that 39% of all House members have served for three years or less and 43% of all Senators entered office after

2008. This explains why membership in the Congressional Fire Service Caucus has declined significantly in recent years. The Fire Caucus was established 1987 to provide a forum for members of Congress to understand the role of the fire service in protecting our homelands and to work together in the spirit of bipartisanship to address fire service issues. Please make sure your State members of Congress serve on the Fire Caucus.

I attended a one day seminar in Sacramento California regarding the long anticipated changes to the ISO grading criteria. Hopefully the changes will be implemented July, 2013. As always, I will believe it when I see it. Columbia River Fire and Rescue, my home District, was recently reevaluated and went from our current class 4/8B to a class 5/8B. We are currently waiting to hear back from ISO for an explanation and what changes CRFR can be implemented to retain our current rating.

NAEFO has made the transition to our new location in Everett Washington, and welcome Administrative Assistant Cindy McMahan. The telephone numbers and website address are still the same. The new address for NAEFO is P.O. Box 4284, Everett WA. 98204.

**NAEFO is currently planning the 2013 Conference in Las Vegas Sept. 23-24. Please visit the NAEFO website for further updates and registration information. [www.naefo.org](http://www.naefo.org)**

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# FEMA Fire Act Grants –

## *More than Apparatus and Equipment*

by Eriks Gabliks, Director

Department of Public Safety Standards and Training?

**The federal Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program recently celebrated its tenth anniversary. The AFG Program is an excellent example of shared stewardship as the nation's major fire service organizations (IAFF, IAFC, NVFC, ISFSI, NAFTD, and others) provide on-going feedback and input to the staff that administers this program. Each year, fire service representatives from across the nation are selected to serve on peer review panels to look at the thousands of grant requests that are submitted. Over the past decade, this program, which is part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), has provided millions of dollars to our nation's fire service through competitive grants.**

There are three categories of grants. The first is the **Assistance to Firefighters Grant** which provides funds for fire vehicle acquisition, operations and safety, and regional projects (communications, equipment, etc). The second is the **Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER)**, which provides funds to help hire and retain career firefighters and assist volunteer and mostly-volunteer fire departments hire new positions. The third is **Fire Prevention and Firefighter Safety Research and Development (FP&S)**. There have been many articles written in our various fire service trade journals about these grant, but what you may not realize is that Oregon has greatly benefited from this program.

For starters, a fire department applying for AFG grants will be asked if it provides training to its members. Specifically, the fire department must indicate the percentage of active firefighters that are trained to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1001 Professional Qualifications Standard. Fire departments with less than 100% must explain their plan to meet this standard. Applicants will find this same question in other program areas. This is in place because the advisory group set the goal that all career and volunteer firefighters in the United States should meet NFPA 1001. This is similar to actions taken by the Oregon fire service through

standards in place for firefighter training and certification with the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST). If your community struggles with training resources, your organization's grant request can include funds to provide training to your members.

The same type of situation will be found in other areas. If your department submits a grant request for SCBA, you can request funds to train your members on how to use them. The same is true of other equipment that your department may request a grant for. No one places equipment in service without training members how to use it. The AFG Program understands this and will allow funds to provide the training.

If your department submits a grant request for a fire truck (engine, tender, etc.) you will be asked if your members will be trained to NFPA 1002 (Driver/Apparatus Operator), and equally important, if they will be trained to operate the new apparatus if you are awarded a grant. The AFG Program Staff have received lots of calls about this requirement but the reason is simple and supported by the AFG Advisory Committee. No fire department should ever place a fire engine or tender in service without providing training to all of the personnel who will be operating it. This training should include both driving the vehicle as well as operating it. Your grant request can include funds to provide this training to your members. If your organization does not have the ability to offer this class in-house, you may request funds to be included in your grant to allow you to bring in a qualified instructor from your regional fire training association or a nearby fire agency to deliver the training to your members.

Since the AFG Program began, more than 70 million dollars has been awarded to more than 600 fire agencies in Oregon. Grants have been awarded for fire apparatus, turn-out gear, SCBA, operations, and safety. The list spans every region of the state and includes Banks, Echo, Halsey-Shedd, McKenzie, Sisters-Camp Sherman, and many, many more.

Many people think SAFER grants are used just to hire and retain career firefighters. While a large portion of the SAFER funds are used for this purpose, a separate pot of money is available to only volunteer fire agencies. Volunteer and mostly-volunteer fire departments might want to look at SAFER grants to address training concerns. Some of the things most often heard at

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## FEMA Fire Act Grants –

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volunteer fire departments is that training takes time, needs coordination, involves paperwork, is either loved or hated, and seems to be something that a committee is responsible for. If your volunteer department does not have a training officer, you might want to consider applying for a SAFER grant. The position you request should be able to respond to emergency calls as their primary duty but could also perform secondary duties, such as that of training officer. In many cases, the SAFER firefighter could be the department's first paid employee. Under the volunteer category, the SAFER firefighter needs to be assigned to a 40-hour work week, not a shift schedule. For volunteer fire departments, this grant could be the solution to many of your training concerns. This employee could establish a training library, create training schedules, complete the pesky paperwork, and ensure that your department is meeting state and national standards. The end result would be an organization that has an established and verifiable training program and also has a dedicated responder to calls 40 hours per week. More than three dozen Oregon fire agencies have received SAFER grants and the amount exceeds 10 million dollars.

The Fire Prevention and Safety Grants (FP&S) are part of the Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG). FP&S Grants support projects that enhance the safety of the public and firefighters from fire and related hazards. The primary goal is to target high-risk populations and reduce injury and prevent death. In 2005, Congress reauthorized funding for FP&S and expanded the eligible uses of funds to include Firefighter Safety Research and Development. More than 14 million dollars in the FP&S category has been awarded to more than 100 fire agencies in Oregon since 2004.

Thanks to the combined efforts of fire departments and fire protection districts across the nation, last month elected officials on Capitol Hill passed House Resolution 4310, the National Defense Authorization Act, and the amendment sponsored by Senator Joseph Lieberman (CT), and co-sponsored by Senators Susan Collins (ME), Thomas Carper (DE) and Scott Brown (MA), authorizing funding for the United States Fire Administration (USFA), as well as the Assistance to Firefighters (FIRE) and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant programs through the end of Fiscal Year 2017.

We encourage you to be aware of this program and be active in your department's grant application process. If you are interested in additional information on the Fire Act Grants, you can find a lot of information online at: <http://www.fema.gov/welcome-assistance-firefighters-grant-program>

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