

SUMMER 2018

A Publication of the Oregon Fire District Directors Association

# The COMMUNIQUE

2018 Oregon Fire  
Service Conference

The Power of  
**TEAMWORK**

October 25-27 • Bend

Hosted by OFDDA

**Length of Service Award Program**

*A valuable tool to help  
retain volunteer firefighters*

**Education, Training, and Grants**

*SDIS Expands Grant Program and Offers  
• Additional Training Opportunities*

*Oregon Fire Service Conference coming to Bend October 25-27, 2018!*



# The COMMUNIQUE

A Publication of the  
Oregon Fire District  
Directors Association

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## MISSION

To serve and strengthen through  
the provision and coordination of  
timely information, education, and  
legislation.

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Oregon's largest fire department, ODF's Fire Protection  
program protects 16 million acres of forest, a \$60 billion asset.

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# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By: Genoa Ingram, OFDDA Executive Director

In addition to the regularly scheduled long sessions (in odd numbered years) and short sessions (in even numbered years), the legislature also meets four times per year for Legislative Days during which all standing and special committees meet. The May Legislative Days were compounded by a Special Session called by the Governor to address certain tax inequities.

The May Special Session convened on the morning of Monday, May 21 for the sole purpose of hearing a bill relating the taxing of sole proprietorships. HB 4310 extended the current tax policy whereby businesses that file as partnerships, S Corporations, LLC, etc., permit individual taxpayers to receive preferential treatment on non-passive income derived through those entities so long as certain requirements are met. HB 4310 extends that policy to sole proprietorships. The price tag for the legislation is approximately \$11.3 million in 2018 and will grow at an estimated rate of five percent per year.

While the new policy does not directly impact fire districts and other local governments, it did serve to spark conversation once again on the need to overhaul Oregon's tax system to provide both equity and sustainability. Because of its reliance on income taxes, Oregon's economy is one of the most volatile in the nation.

During the May Legislative Days, the Department of Forestry provided an update on last year's catastrophic wildfire season. Of particular interest was whether Oregon would continue to send resources out of state when Oregon faces its own monumental challenges. The time frame for reimbursement from neighboring states for such assistance was also a topic of discussion, particularly since another robust fire season is being predicted.

On Wednesday, May 23, economists provided Oregon's quarterly revenue forecast. As predicted, the economy continues to grow, with \$1.8 billion available in budget reserves. The continued growth is expected to trigger the personal "kicker" in 2019. However, you may recall that kicker funds are now returned in the form of a tax credit as opposed to a check directly to taxpayers.

During the interim, the OFDDA continues to work on urban renewal issues; in particular, giving fire districts more say in the "consult and confer" process. We also continue to support our fire service partners.

Updates on these and other "hot topics" will be provided at our 2018 Oregon Fire Service Conference at The Riverhouse in Bend on October 25-27. On behalf of OFDDA's Board of Directors, Past Presidents, and staff, we hope you will join us!



**Don Thompson**  
OFDDA President

## President's Message

The theme of the 2018 Oregon Fire Service Conference is "The Power of Teamwork." It couldn't be more timely—teamwork is a concept that plays a crucial role in the services we provide to our communities. To be successful requires a team effort in the fire service—on the fireground, in the board room, in the district office, and at the state legislature.

To focus on the differences that exist between the interests of chief officers and elected officials and career personnel and volunteer personnel is to discount the inherent commonalities we share and to ignore the time-proven principle that we are strongest and we accomplish more when we work together.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Donald J. Thompson".

# EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

## SDIS Expands Grant Program and Offers Additional Training Opportunities

Each year, SDIS offers our members grant funding for safety and security issues that their districts are facing through the Safety and Security Matching Grant Program. This program assists members with funding of projects that lead to reduced exposure in high-level claims categories. It is our goal to eliminate or lower risk to the SDIS insurance program by supporting members' proactive approaches to preventing loss. Recently, the SDIS Trust approved a dramatic increase in funding to increase the number of members that can benefit from this opportunity. Funds available have increased from \$300,000 to \$450,000.

We will continue to follow the same guidelines as prior years and offer a 50% matching grant up to \$5,000. For example, districts with a \$5,000 project will be eligible for \$2,500 and those with a \$10,000 project will be eligible for \$5,000. SDIS will use two priority levels in determining grant recipients:

- **First Priority:** Grant applicants who have never received an SDIS Safety & Security Grant.
- **Second Priority:** Grant applicants who have received an SDIS Safety & Security Grant *prior* to 2018.

After the two priority levels have been funded, matching grants will be awarded to applicants that meet the eligibility requirements *in the order the application is received*, until funds have been exhausted. More information about this program will be available in early fall.

The SDIS Trust also approved funds for the continuation of our drone training and software licensing program with Drone Complier. We are excited to be offering this training series during the fall and spring at five different locations in the state. As with last year, SDIS members enrolled in the property casualty program can send one

person from their district at no charge (no shows will be charged half the training cost). This is a four-day course covering all aspects of safe drone flight – three days of classroom training and one day in the field with the attendee's personal drone. Participants will receive certificate of completion as a Chief Pilot for their district. This will allow them to supervise and manage other Part 107 pilots in their department. Participating districts will also be provided with access to Drone Complier software. Plan missions, assign pilots and hardware, track and log flights, and simplify your record keeping and risk management with SDIS's licensed Drone Complier software platform for desktop and mobile devices.

You are encouraged to bring your district's drone to the final day of class as that is flight training. If you do not have one, it will be possible to borrow one for this portion of the program.

Watch your mailbox for information about both programs in the coming months. If you have any questions, please contact us at [memberservices@sdao.com](mailto:memberservices@sdao.com).



**NOW HIRING**



Check out DPSST's available career opportunities in the Training Division at: <https://tinyurl.com/DPSSTJobOpenings>.



## OVFA Update

### SELLERS RECOGNIZED FOR SERVICE ON GOVERNORS FIRE SERVICE POLICY COUNCIL



Chief Jim Walker presented David Sellers with an award recognizing his years of service and dedication to the Governor's Fire Service Policy Council. Sellers, who represented the Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association on the council, served two consecutive

three-year terms beginning in 2012, terming out December 31, 2017.

Sellers helped the council fulfill its mission to provide advice and guidance on issues of common interest, policies, and affairs that affect the fire protection and life safety of the people of Oregon.

Congratulations and thank you, David, for your unwavering commitment and dedication to Oregon's fire service over the past 36 years! You have made a difference in the lives of all Oregonians.

### SHOP TO SUPPORT YOUR VOLUNTEERS

OVFA's fall fundraiser, the September 29 Fall Fashion Frenzy, will take place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Woodburn Premium Outlets in Woodburn, Oregon.

Visit: [www.eventbrite.com/e/fall-fashion-frenzy-tickets-41084392524](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/fall-fashion-frenzy-tickets-41084392524) to purchase tickets. Be sure to select the Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association as your charity of choice.

The Fall Fashion Frenzy event includes giveaways, a silent auction, a raffle, fun activities, and chances to save big on purchases. All the proceeds from this event go to local charities.

## Online Training with SafePersonnel

Board members must often juggle a full schedule of their own time commitments and that of the district. This can make it challenging to stay up to date on necessary training. SDAO makes that easier for your board by offering complimentary access to our online training program. The trainings can be utilized at any time of the day and at any location, making it easy for your board members to stay educated.

This program, offered through SafePersonnel, contains a wide range of training topics offered to meet all types of districts' needs. Courses geared specifically toward special district board members include:

- Government Ethics
- Public Meetings Law
- Successful Governance for Local Officials
- SDAO Board Training

This platform is a great addition to any board member training program and is offered at no cost to your district. If your district is not yet utilizing this valuable tool, please contact SDAO Member Services at [memberservices@sdao.com](mailto:memberservices@sdao.com).



## OFSOA Update

By: Julie Spor, OFSOA President  
Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District

The OFSOA fall conference will be held in Bend, Oregon at the Riverhouse on October 17-19, 2018. The conference committee is working hard to put together a great lineup of speakers.

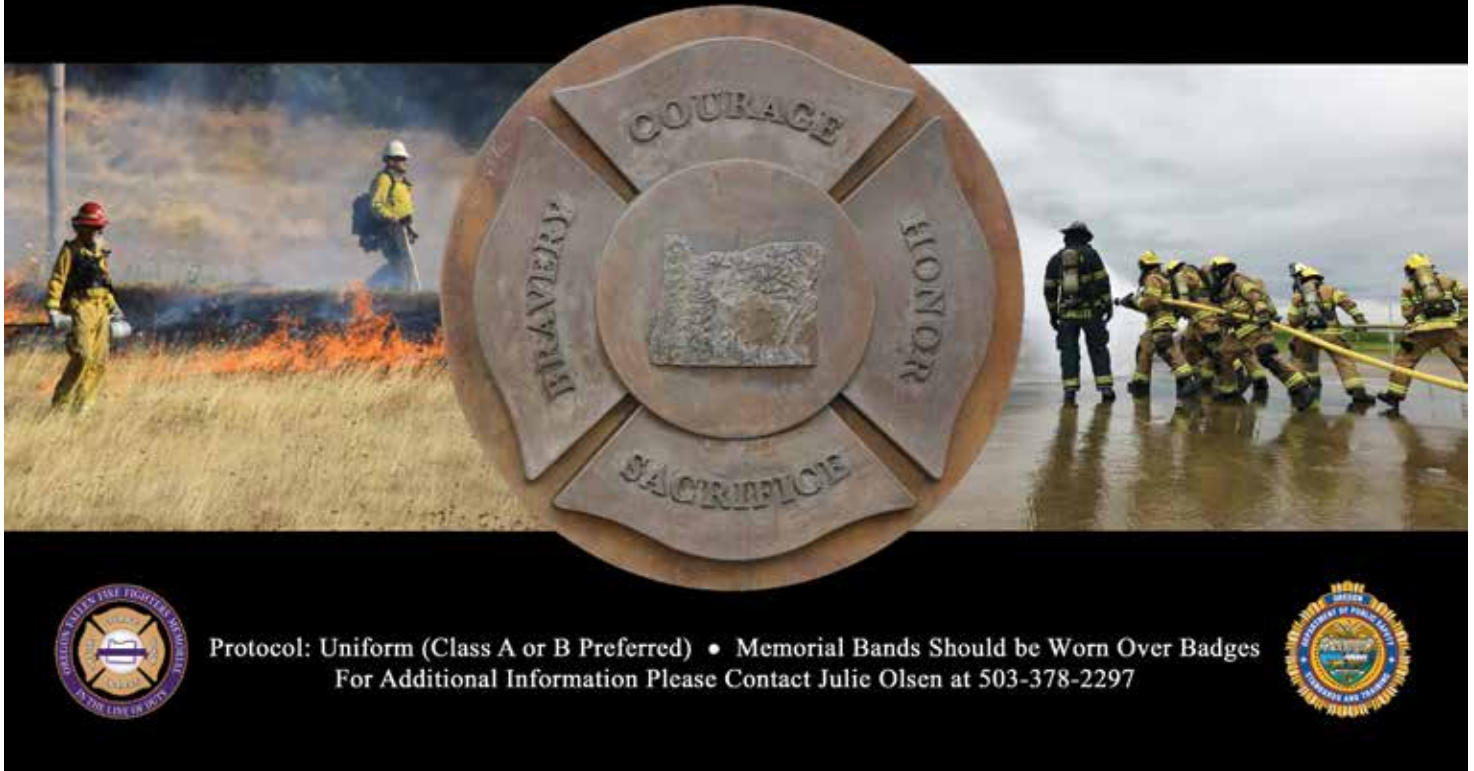
The Board approved a fourth level of Accreditation for OFSOA at our last Board meeting, which provides another incentive to our members to continue learning and growing within the organization, and our jobs within our individual districts. More information on our accreditation program can be found on our website.

OFSOA membership numbers continue to grow. If you have staff members who are not currently involved in OFSOA, please encourage them to attend one of our events so they can see the benefits of our organization for themselves. We offer member and non-member rates for each event.

If there is anything OFSOA can do for you, please contact me at 541-549-0771 or [spor@sistersfire.com](mailto:spor@sistersfire.com).

# OREGON FALLEN FIRE FIGHTERS MEMORIAL

September 20th, 2018 at 1:00PM • Oregon Public Safety Academy • 4190 Aumsville Hwy SE • Salem, OR 97317



## Oregon Fire Service Museum, Memorial and Learning Center Update

Construction continues on the Oregon Fire Service Museum building at Powerland Heritage Park near Salem. The concrete foundation and floor slab were poured in March, and after curing, erection of the metal building began in April. The exterior of the building is now substantially complete with just some minor flashing to be installed.

Construction of the facade wall will begin shortly. This wall is framed separately due to the requirements of the brick panels that will be installed. The building windows have been ordered and will be delivered in July. Interior framing will also begin soon.

Fundraising for the construction continues. Our thanks to Astoria, Clatskanie, and Silverton for donating retired apparatus to the museum. These are resold to private parties for fire protection or to collectors and are a significant source of construction funds. If your district has surplus apparatus to dispose of, please consider donating it to the museum. Obsolete equipment is also accepted for this purpose.

Membership renewal notices will be mailed soon. Please renew your memberships as this is the source of funds for all of our regular operating expenses such as insurance, utilities, and apparatus maintenance. If you are not yet a member, please consider joining. Applications are available on our website at [www.oregonfiremuseum.org](http://www.oregonfiremuseum.org).



# Length of Service Award Program Increases

By: Rebekah Dohrman, Local Government Law Group



For those of you administering a Length of Service Award Program (a LOSAP), you should know that the federal government increased the cap on annual contributions to an individual's LOSAP from \$3,000 to \$6,000. This change became effective as of January 1, 2018, and also includes a mechanism to automatically increase the cap to track inflation. Therefore, if you have a LOSAP, now is the time to review the plan. While reviewing your plan, you may want to work with your accountant, plan administrator, or legal counsel.

This change in law is widely viewed as a triumph for volunteer emergency responders and the districts that they serve. The previous \$3,000 cap was established in 1996 and, until now, was never adjusted. \$3,000 in 1996 is roughly the equivalent of \$4,600 today. Therefore, to comply with the 1996 cap, districts were actually contributing less (value-wise) than what the 1996 cap intended. This change brings the cap up to date and allows it to be adjusted to keep up with inflation.

For those of you who might not be familiar, a LOSAP is a retirement account for volunteer emergency responders who meet minimum service requirements. Described in section 457(e)(11)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code, a LOSAP is an example of one of the modest financial incentives that districts can offer to their volunteers to help with recruitment and retention. If you have any questions about LOSAPs or any other types of incentives that you can offer to volunteers, contact your legal counsel.

*Note: This update is informational only and is not intended as legal advice. If you have questions about any of the information in this update please contact your legal counsel.*

## OFDDA: Oregon's LOSAP Plan Administrators

The Length of Service Award Program is a valuable tool to help member districts retain volunteer firefighters.

OFDDA is the plan administrator for the Length of Service Award Program in Oregon. LOSAP provides fire districts and departments with an approved method to thank volunteers for their service and expresses appreciation for the volunteer's years of service.

LOSAP is a deferred compensation plan classified by the Internal Revenue Service as a '457e11' plan. Participating agencies can elect to make contributions on behalf of eligible volunteers (up to \$6,000 per participant per year).

Vesting in the program is determined by the individual agency; eligibility for a distribution of contributed funds is typically based on the volunteer's separation from service vesting status at the time of separation.

We invite you to contact the OFDDA office at 800-223-9708 or [laureal@ofdda.com](mailto:laureal@ofdda.com) to learn more about this unique volunteer benefit.

### The Legal Beagle Local Government Law Group PC

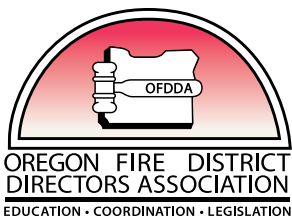
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## Oregon Fire Service Conference

**October 25-27, 2018  
Bend, Oregon**

Contact The Riverhouse at 800-547-3928 by September 23, 2018, to make room reservations. Mention the "Oregon Fire District Director Association" room block to receive a discounted rate. Negotiated room rates range from \$104 to \$144 per night plus taxes and fees, subject to availability. Hotel guests may enjoy a complimentary breakfast.

## 2018 Oregon Fire Service Conference Coming to Bend in October!

The 2018 Oregon Fire Service Conference will be held at The Riverhouse in Bend, Oregon on October 25-27. This year's sessions will educate attendees and further the efforts of departments and agencies to work collaboratively to strengthen Oregon's fire service through "The Power of Teamwork."

Registration will begin in early August. Conference details, including scholarship information, will be available at: [www.ofdda.com](http://www.ofdda.com) soon.

The conference schedule includes two OFDDA Annual Business Meetings. Nominations and elections for open OFDDA Board Member positions are conducted at the business meetings. Article IV, Section A-2 of the OFDDA Restated Constitution and Bylaws mandates that Director Position two and three shall be elected in even numbered years for a two-year term meaning two director seats will be open for election. If you are interested in serving on the Board, visit the OFDDA website to download an application, fax your completed form to staff at 503-364-9919, then contact OFDDA nominating committee chair Dennis Rogers to be considered.

The Oregon Fire Service Conference also serves as a forum for the Association's memorial service to honor any member of the fire service (personnel, administrative staff, and elected officials) who have passed during the year. The prestigious District Director Service Awards and the District of the Year Award are also presented at the conference. Visit the OFDDA website to download the forms.

We look forward to seeing you at OFDDA's largest training and networking event of the year in beautiful Bend, Oregon!