



The Size up!

Happy Holidays from the men and women of the
**ILLINOIS PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS
ASSOCIATION**

THE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Terry B. Cox

I WOULD LIKE TO WISH EVERYONE A GREAT AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR!

The fact is this year is going to be a year that will bring challenges that require new thinking and strategies to keep up with the fast pace and tactics that are being implemented by many federal, state and municipal governmental organizations. This will be a year when firefighters across the state of Illinois will have to realize The Down State Fireman's pension system as a whole is under attack from the several agencies that on one hand will complement the system then will make every effort to dismantle the things that make this one of the better retirement systems in the country. There is an effort to reform our pension system and introduce legislation to change existing state statutes that will water down benefits and allow their influences to gain more control of a system that is old and needs some tweaking but is not broken and does not need major reform. These agencies are attacking from many directions and have their interests and objectives in mind; not the interest of you the participants.

THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

SUDAN

As you recall last year, we went thru a year involving the Sudan issues that cost several funds large sums of resources before we could negotiate a compromise. As your Executive Director, I

was the only one involved in several meetings in Chicago and Springfield with State Senator Jacqueline Collins and Parliamentarian Joseph Cleary. I offered the wording that was used to stabilize the legislation and take article 3 and 4 funds from the umbrella that made us part of the Sudan bill. This made me realize that forces much larger than the state government are looking at any opportunity to water down the system as we enjoy it today.

PENISON REFORM

Parliamentarian Joseph Cleary from President Emil Jones's office convened a meeting in Springfield last spring. Agencies from state pension funds were invited to attend this meeting to discuss issues that could affect our systems. Several state offices and associations were in attendance. Representing fire departments were IPFA, AFFI, IML and the Department of Insurance to name a few. Many issues were covered and suggested. Most of them would require clarification but only a couple would require legislation to improve the system.

After that meeting, the Illinois Municipal League has taken on an initiative to start reforming larger down state fire and police pension systems. Several town meetings have been held throughout the state to inform and implement legislation and clarifications to "improve our not broken systems". The City of Lake Forest held such a meeting and a lot of ground was covered. The IPFA, IPPFA, FOP, IMRF and many other agencies participated in the discussions. The thrust was intended to improve and reduce the high costs of fire and police pensions as they impact the municipal governments. Things such as unfunded liabilities, insurance costs (because of catastrophic injuries legislation) and investment parameters were debated by almost all the participants. Because the municipal governments feel the impact of these statutes, they would like more say in how and when funds are paid out. However the statutes governing such payouts are covered by workers compensation and other influences. The state statutes require hearings and procedures that are debated in the courts. In the near future there may be another Constitutional Convention (con-con), such as the one in the 1990's to rewrite the state Constitution. These issues will surely be topics that will be addressed in those venues if the conventions occur.

The Board of Directors is moving forward with several needed changes:

The bi-laws	Advertising
Size up format	Web site

These are but a few of the long required changes needed to serve you better. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your patience during these changes and ask for any suggestions that *you, our subscribers*, may have. The return of the size up will keep you informed as we work to make our communications timelier. Please watch for a major web site update; this new format will be more user friendly. Printable forms, order forms, and comments will allow a media for your input.