

# The Size up!

## ILLINOIS PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

### THE DIRECTOR'S CORNER Terry B. Cox

2660, copies of the new full volume "THE SIZE UP" were mailed out on 3/24/09. You should have received a copy by now, if you did not please call or e-mail the office so we can find out why.

#### *Support the Social Security Fairness Act, SB 484 and HB 235.*

On the national front we have been tracking SB 483. This Act would repeal the unfair Government Pension Offset (WPO) and the windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) – two provisions that take money that you have earned working either in education or government from you when you retire.

The GOP and the WEP legislations hurt us financially and take our money which should be ours and has been earned by those of us who work in education or for the government. Many Senators and representatives know this and are ready to overturn these laws.

Please let your legislative representatives know you support the Social Security Fairness Act Senate bill 484 and house bill 235.

#### **Making downstate pension funds IRS complaint is going well.**

We are working actively with the Coalition on IRS compliance. We will be getting up-dates from a meeting in Springfield, scheduled for 3/31/09. More will follow.

#### **Washington D.C.**

The Illinois Fire Services will be going to Washington D.C. to meet and greet the legislators in person. They will have the agenda developed to declare the needs of the Illinois Fire Services. Although the IPFA can-not afford to send any one, we will be represented via other members that will be present.

#### **IPFA has attended several meetings to help solve state issues about pensions.**

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#### Changing of the Guard

We have been busy with legislation and the changing of the guard in the new General Assembly in Springfield.

*We are happy to announce that one of IPFA's long time associate members, Mr. David Vaught, of the Investment advisory firm Mitchell, Vaught & Taylor, Has accepted the role as Senior Advisor on financial affairs and business development to Governor Patrick Quinn. We would like to congratulate David in his new role and I am sure he will take the same integrity and reputation that he learned as a graduate of West Point Naval Academy to his new venture.*

If David is in Springfield on May 14, I hope he will be able to attend the Medal on honor ceremony.

#### Pension Reform 2008

Last year IPFA and several other fire services, interested parties, regarding downstate pension funds, were requested by Senators Curry and Garrett to negotiate with the IML and work out some pension fund reform. We agreed on and introduced the pension reform bill. This bill was passed into law; as soon as this bill went into effect the municipal leagues started introducing legislation to modify the intent of that bill. This effort is still going on.

#### SB – 2212 Amends the Illinois Pension Code.

The Northwest Municipal League introduced SB-2212. The intent of this bill is to amend the Illinois Pension Code concerning public Pension Division examinations or investigations of pension funds (i) provides that the division of insurance may retain attorneys, independent actuaries, independent certified public accountants, and specialists as examiners as deemed necessary by the director of insurance and removes language providing that the costs if these professionals shall be borne by the pension fund that is the subject of the examination and (ii) in provisions concerning the examination of downstate police and fire pension funds, provides that, beginning on December 31, 2016, the schedule of each examination shall be such that each fund shall be examined once every 5 years (was once every 3 years).Increases the annual compliance fees with respect to a downstate police or fire pension fund from 0.02%(2 basis points) of the total assets of the pension fund, but not more than \$8,000.00 to 0.03% (3 basis points) of the total assets of the pension fund, but not more than \$12,000.00. Effective immediately.

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Mark Mifflin and Terry Cox representing the IPFA in Sen. Garrett's meeting on 3/24/09

When SB 2212 was introduced, the majority of the police and fire service associations declared to be opposition of this bill. The pension law committee wanted to know what the objections were. A representative of Sen. Susan Garrett's office called the IPFA office and asked us to be represented in a meeting in the capital building. In that meeting IPFA lobbyist, Mark Mifflin and I were present. Sen. Garrett asked why the groups were opposed to this bill. We explained that we could not support the funding increases requested in this bill;

1. Because the funding for the department of insurance is on a fee based system, there should be funding available to operate the system.
2. Because the funds have been swept for the last several years the department is funded at a sub grade level and not able to absorb these increases.
3. We feel if the funds were not swept the majority of the moneys needed to increase these services would be there. And if there are no sweeps and the funds were not there they would raise the fees and cover these expenses.
4. Until the legislature could provide some type of guarantee that the funds collected would not be swept. We could not justify to our constituents the need for an increase.
5. If the department was able to operate without sweeps, there should be no need for new legislation to increase these services as required by the statutes that are in force. If the fees do not cover expenses present law allows the department to increase these funds by justification of the need.

This has not been resolved as of this writing; we will keep you informed when and if things develop.

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#### **IPFA day at the Illinois State Fair will be August 15, 2009**

Every year the IPFA operates the state fair in Springfield for a day. Our day this year will be Saturday August 15. We need about 22 people to do all that needs to be done including exhibits and etc. Anyone that has the time and would like to help we will have things for you to do. Come join us and educate the children and adults as well. On a typical day between 1000 and 2000 people will go thru our displays. You will get entrance, parking tickets, lunch and time off for you enjoy some exhibits on you own. This is an opportunity to show you care as a firefighter. If interested call the office at 1-630-833-2405 or e-mail at ipfa@aol.com

#### **Our 16th Annual Fallen Fighters Memorial & Medal of Honor Awards Ceremony,**

Will be held in on May 14, 2009, at 10:30 A.M., on the State Capitol lawn in the southeast corner and continue in the State of Illinois Armory Building. The event will start with a fire truck muster at 10:00AM. The Ceremony will commence at 10:30 at the memorial. A parade past the fire truck muster will lead guests to the Armory, the Medal of Honor awards will be presented by the Medal of Honor Committee and the stories will be read by Max Armstrong.

#### **The Medal of Honor**

*The Medal of Honor is the highest award given by the state of Illinois to a firefighter for an act of outstanding bravery or heroism, by which the firefighter has demonstrated in a great degree the characteristics of selflessness and personal courage above and beyond the call of duty, under adverse conditions, with the possibility of extreme personal risk*

#### **The Medal of Valor**

*The medal of Valor is given by the state of Illinois to a firefighter for an act of heroism or bravery that clearly demonstrated courage and dedication in the face of danger, while in the performance of duty.*

This year the committee considered about 40 nominations from throughout the state. About 33 of those will receive recognition for their exceptional work. Nominations from throughout the state are considered for occurrences from the previous year.