

TEXAS FIREMEN

The Magazine for Emergency Professionals



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TENTATIVE AGENDA

Friday, January 31

- 8 AM - Noon TIESB Board
- Noon TESPAC Board
- 1 - 5 PM SFFMA Executive Board

Saturday, February 1

- 8:30 AM Golf Tournament Committee
- 8:30 - 10:30 AM Constitution & By-laws Committee
- Pumper Races Committee
- Fire Marshals Committee
- Finance Committee
- 8:30 AM - Noon Certification Board
- Ladies Auxiliary Meeting
- 9 - 10 AM Sergeant at Arms
- 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM Poster Committee
- Exhibits Committee
- Memorial Committee
- Driving Contest Committee
- EMS Committee
- 11 AM T*Flag Committee
- 12:30 PM Conference Training Workshops
- 12:30 - 1:30 PM LUNCH (not provided)
- 1:30 - 3 PM District Officers Symposium Follow Up
- 3 - 4 PM Review of June Conference Schedule
- Following Site Selection Report

SFFMA PLANNING CONFERENCE

January 31 - February 1, 2014

Overton Hotel, Lubbock

HOTEL INFORMATION

Overton Hotel & Conference Center
 Address: 2322 Mac Davis Ln
 Lubbock, TX 79401
 Ph: 806.776.7000

Room rate: \$109 + tax (room/night)
 Cut off date: January 17, 2014

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

June 6 - 11, 2014

Lubbock, TX

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Have you ever had a time in your life where things were flying by so fast that you question yourself "what happened to the month of"? For several months now my world has

been in hyper speed with numerous projects, travels, etc. going on. Within only a few months I've been through an extremely busy legislative session, our annual conference, various fire schools, an international conference in Panama, testing and development of our new database and website, and also oversight our building construction project. Where has the time gone!?!

The biggest project is our new building. While the project is moving along, there have been some construction delays like the issue with the construction steel, delays due to rain, and the tragic car accident where we lost three of the roofing-crew members. In spite of these events, the building is really starting to take shape. Trust that it will be a rock solid building with quality building materials, heavy timber, and some of the latest technology for security, access control, and networking.

We could not have made this building project possible without YOUR SUPPORT, and that of our Executive Board and staff for their dedication. I also want to give special recognition to VFIS of Texas who has generously donated more than \$50,000 in funds for the building that will be dedicated toward the training room A/V and technology equipment. In addition, two of our members have made generous donations that will save us money – John Hobbs will provide all of the parking lot striping, and Past President Kyle Stephens will provide all of the extinguishers and cabinets. THANK YOU!!

Our next big project that has been ongoing for months is the upgrade to our database. We have gone through months of setup, testing and finally implementation of the upgrade on the staff access level. We had to purchase a new server to handle the upgrade and website. The upgrade will feature a whole new website design and user experience

in addition to an overhaul of our online store. This change will include a new mobile website and more networking/ social media opportunities for our members.

Another new/major project you will soon see is our new membership cards. I'm sure you have had the same experiences I have had with our membership cards coming apart, sticking to other cards, etc. Well, no more!! We are implementing a new membership card type that will be a hard plastic and will not fade or rip apart. We are excited about this new style card as it will bring us some future possibilities such as using QR codes for credentialing, importation of a picture, magnetic striping, etc.. We will begin implementing this new style card with the 2014 membership year renewals. See page 10 for the new look!

Some new member benefits are coming your way! We are proud to announce that David Harris, CEO of a company called Assets In Order has donated free services to his company, a total worth of \$396,000! Please see page 20 for more information on this great program. We are also announcing two new member benefit programs aimed at saving you money! The launch of Solavei gives members unlimited talk, text and data for just \$49 a month and pays you for bringing on other customers to the Solavei network. See page 12 for more details. Last but not least, Stream Energy has set up a program for emergency responders aimed to discount your monthly electricity bill. See page 12 for details.

As you can see, the SFFMA staff and board are working hard to bring you value for your membership and offer programs and member benefits to say Thank You for your contributions to the emergency services of Texas. Please take advantage of our member benefits and visit www.sffma.org/benefits

Be Safe and Thank you for your service to the State of Texas!

Chris Barron
Executive Director



Life gives us opportunities and we must make the decisions to take those opportunities or not. When taking those opportunities, it is up to us to make them positive experiences, some are easier than others, but it is always

up to the person receiving the opportunity to determine the outcome. The fire service has offered several opportunities to me. When I started to write this article for the *Texas Firemen Magazine* it allowed me to stop and reflect on my time in the Fire and EMS and the great people I have met, the things I have learned, the events that I have experienced, and the great impact those opportunities have made on my life.

As a kid growing up in Sudan, Texas, in early 1985, I was given a chance to become part of the Sudan Volunteer Fire and EMS where I learned what community was all about. I received a great foundation in understanding the importance of actively training, following safety standards, and was fortunate to be taught by great leaders and chiefs. While still young in the fire service, I was exposed to things I never really grasped, until later in my fire service career. I was exposed to regionalization for training, resource sharing, and the value of collaborative teamwork. The things I was learning are a necessity to be successful in the fire service, and some were being done before it was common practice. I got the opportunity to start attending the Panhandle

Firemen and Fire Marshals' Association meetings. I spent time with members of other departments, worked with district leaders and TEEEX to plan several of the area planning schools, and got educated on how the SFFMA works with the committees and certification program.

I was able to be part of that district for several years, getting the chance to be part of the board, serving on the certification board, and attending several conferences and quarterly meetings. This is where my desire for involvement in the SFFMA was fostered and encouraged.

I have been fortunate to get the opportunity to teach at area schools such as Canyon, Lubbock, Abilene, Mineral Wells, Floydada, Brownfield, Sudan, and Aspermont. These experiences led me to the ability to start teaching at the TEEEX Annual Municipal School. The experience teaching at one of the largest fire schools in the world to some of the greatest firefighters in the country was a great privilege. The ability to bring firefighters from other departments across the State of Texas to this location and teach as a cohesive team was a learning experience. This opportunity taught me how to have open communication about how things are done differently and similarly in departments, and provide that information to the students. This school and the teamwork taught by the instructors is a big reason the volunteer fire service in Texas is so strong and works so well with all other parts of the fire service and public safety. This instructional experience serves as a great reminder of the dedication of those firefighters and EMS responders that serve each community and what a privilege to help those

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Rusty Kattner,
Paul Hamilton,
Henry Perry,
Harvie Cheshire
David Wade

Back row from L to R:

Chris Barron,
Ben Kennedy,
Jim White,
Joe Ondrasek,
Rayford Gibson,
JoDee Ondrasek

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PRESIDENT'S FORUM

learn and practice the firefighting and rescue skills that make Texas a safe place to live, work and visit.

I say all this to recognize the opportunities I was given. The reason I was given those opportunities was because of those fire service and SFFMA association leaders that came before me and took the time to lay a path for my generation of firefighters to follow. They also taught us to remember the responsibility we have to serve and why I feel so honored to be able to serve as the president of this great association. While I have been on the Executive Board I have served with great people, worked with a great Executive Director and amazing staff. During this time the members allowed the board the ability to start a new building project, worked on updating the association strategic plan, worked on growing the TEMSB, worked on establishing stronger, more identifiable relations with other fire service agencies, started the TESPAC, built stronger legislative relationships, and strengthened our partnerships with TEEX, TFS, TDEM, SFMO, and DSHS.

The Certification Board is meeting the challenge given them by the Executive Board to expand the best volunteer certification program in the country and creating a validation processes for that program. By doing this it allows the Executive Board to be able to comfortably say we are equal to or exceed any program in the state. The conference committee is working hard on developing an educational program for this conference to appeal to all parts of the state and all parts of fire and EMS allowing for great training experiences from the newest member to the fire department to seasoned Fire Chiefs.

The member benefits continue to grow, providing one of the best association benefit packages in the country. This package includes discounts for travel, cell phones, insurances, and \$5000 AD&D for every member.

The association is strong and growing! But we must be making sure as today's leaders that there is a path of opportunities for the new firefighters to follow and understand the importance of being involved in this association and work with others in the fire service to make sure we have a safe and stronger fire service.

We have to work to engage the next generation of fire service with technology, involvement, and remember to allow them to bring innovation to what we do. The current schedule to the annual conference has changed allowing more opportunities for an attendee to pick and participate in what is important to them individually. We have begun to leverage technology with apps for phones and at the end of our database upgrade allowing individual access to your records from the web at any time, but we must do more to allow us to get information

across the state in a timely manner; one of the things that I hope helps is a blog I will begin in October, allowing for information to be sent in a timely manner that will be available from the association web site at sffma.org. The staff continues to use the website, twitter, and Facebook to update and promote our association.

Other opportunities include the association leaders sitting down and bringing some of our new members into the meeting to continue the hard conversation we started in Waco this year about what role the districts serve and what can be done to improve involvement with today's firefighters at that level in the association. The Board approved a plan to establish two working committees. A Health and Safety Committee that Immediate Past President David Wade will chair, this committee is charged with working on addressing life safety initiatives and increasing the wellness of the volunteer fire service. We also approved the establishment of a Combination Department committee to start helping address the needs of the growing number of combination departments in this state. We hope this will help our members and address changes that are occurring in the fire service today.

We must continue to work to lay the path and develop opportunities for the firefighters of today to become the next leaders to take this association and the fire service to even greater places.

In closing I want to thank some people that gave me great opportunities and those that supported me so I could take advantage of those opportunities.

Thank you to my wife and family for allowing me to be gone and taking care of things while I was gone. To my other family, the Leander Fire Department and the City of Leander for the support and encouragement.

To the guys on Project 64 from TEEX Annual School for providing advice and humor. Special thank you to the following for teaching me, being patient with me, and providing a strong foundation:

Chief Orville Hill
Sudan Volunteer Fire Dept. (retired)

Chief Theron Hill
Sudan Volunteer Fire Dept. (retired)

Fire Marshal Carl Burnett
Sudan Volunteer Fire Dept. (retired)

Chief Rodney Williams
Matador Volunteer Fire Dept.

Chief Don Huckabey
Littlefield Fire Department (deceased)

Director Monica McGee
Littlefield EMS

Director Richard Herrington
Austin-Travis Co. EMS (retired)

Chief John Kiracofe
Jollyville Fire Dept.

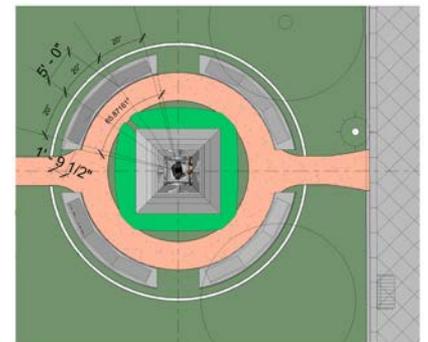
Chief Jerry Williams
Leander Fire Dept. (Retired/TFS)

Special thank you to Mike, Curtis and Damon for your friendship and counsel.

And special thank you to the members of the State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association in trusting me to be your president this year and to that next generation of firefighters, take advantage of the opportunities given to you, make them count, and you soon will be responsible for leading.

Bill Gardner
Bill Gardner
President

CAPITOL MONUMENT PROPOSED EXPANSION



The SFFMA Monument at the Capitol grounds currently does not have any room left for LODD names to be added. In cooperation with the State of Texas Preservation Board (who has ultimate approval of anything going on the Capitol grounds), a memorial expansion project is being proposed which will include large pieces of granite and plenty of room for names to be added to the monument for many, many decades.

This project will have to be paid by SFFMA and initial estimates indicate it will cost over \$100,000 for all of the granite, installation and site work.

VFIS OF TEXAS INTRODUCES A NEW SAFETY & TRAINING GRANT

VFIS of Texas and Texas Mutual Insurance Company are proud to sponsor a need-based grant program for fire departments in Texas. Grants will be awarded to reimburse departments for the cost of certification dues/fees and/or travel expense to attend training which is recognized and/or leads toward a certification. Grants up to \$2,500 will be awarded based on financial need and are intended to encourage all departments to participate in certification programs and training which will prevent firefighter deaths and injuries. Departments will need to apply for the grant, expend the funds and then send in copies of receipts or proof of training attendance in order to receive the grant funds.

Who is eligible:

- Part I (Certification Dues) – Departments whose members are not currently participating in a certification program
- Part II (Travel Expenses) – Any department attending training that is recognized or leading to a certification

What is eligible:

- Part I – SFFMA Individual dues allowing for participation in the certification program and tracking of training objectives toward firefighter certification or TCFP certification fees
- Part II - Reimbursement for travel expenses (up to \$150 per day per person) for training that leads toward or is required by a certification program (travel to/from, meals/tips, hotel/dorm)

How it works:

- Departments can apply for Part I, Part II or Both
- Departments should apply for assistance first (completed grant application and W-9)
- Applications will be reviewed and notice will be sent to those awarded a grant
- Departments will then be responsible for sending in paid certification dues receipts or paid travel receipts and course completion certificates for each student attending the requested training program in order to receive reimbursement

How to Apply: Fill out application available at

http://www.vfistx.com/uploads/6/2/9/1/6291319/2013_grant_app.pdf

Application Deadline is December 31, 2013.



For more information contact VFIS of Texas at 1.800.252.9435

A BIT OF ASSOCIATION HISTORY...

..Mr. Chairman, Members of the Executive Board, fellow firefighters, Ladies and Gentlemen. My name is Howard Baughman, Fire Chief for the City of Del Rio. I come before you to return a very valuable piece of this great associations' history to its rightful place. I have the shoeshine box.



Original shoe box from 1962

Some, and probably a great many of you younger firefighters, have no knowledge of the history behind this shoeshine box, other than the fact that you have seen it around from time to time. Allow me if you will, to tell you what I know about it. I do know that if it could talk, it could tell you some glorious tales about the men that have had to carry it over the years, and some of them would probably curl your hair. It all started in Del Rio, 31 years ago this year by the late W. E. (Bill) Zorn, who was the Fire Chief of the City of Del Rio at that time. In 1962, Chief Zorn was the 1st Vice President of the State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas.

Bill, as he was known by everyone did not like the idea of the newly elected 4th Vice Presidents being required to shine the Presidents' shoes, especially when he had to rest the president's shoe on his knee in order to shine it, he thought that was terrible so he decided to build a shoeshine box and present it to the newly elected 4th Vice President at the 1962 Convention in McAllen, Texas. The first man honored to use this new shoeshine box was the late Earl Phillips of Hereford, Texas, who was the newly elected 4th Vice President in McAllen. He was to use this shoeshine box to shine the Presidents' shoes and pass it on to the next 4th Vice President, and so for the past 31 years the shoeshine box has been passed on to every newly elected 4th Vice President. Each one of them has had to carry it with them and guard it from being stolen. It became the normal thing to steal the shoeshine box and have the man responsible for it to wonder who had it and where it might be.

We borrowed it last July from 4th Vice President Patrick Hlavaty of El Campo, so that we would have it at our Wintergarden District meeting in Del Rio for its 30th Anniversary.

I was a young firefighter for Chief Zorn when the shoeshine box was introduced to me, I'd been with him about seven years and he asked me to paint and letter it for him, and told me what to put on it. It has the same paint and lettering on it today. I don't really know whether Chief Zorn ever intended for this ritual to last as long as it has, but I know that if he was with us today, he would be very proud to know that a simple, little fun-filled adventure that he started has been a tradition of this great association for the past 30 years.

It has been cussed and discussed by many over the years but it has withstood the test of time. An attempt was made to retire it but the attempt failed. Maybe someday it will be retired, but for now it is still with us and I hope that it will remain with us for many years to come. I am extremely proud to have this valuable piece of our history with me at our meeting today. I look back over the years with a great deal of satisfaction, just knowing that I played a small part in bringing this little bit of tradition to this great association of ours for the last 31 years. Thank you Patrick for letting us have it for a little while. Now, Mr. Chairman, I'll turn the shoe box over to you, so that you may return it to its rightful owner.

This transcript is from 1993. The original shoe box is still passed to the newly elected 4th Vice President every June at the annual conference.

At the 2013 Annual Conference, Chief Henry Perry presented two new shoe boxes to the 4th Vice President Harvie Cheshire.



State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas

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HAS YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS CHANGED AND YOU NO LONGER RECEIVE OUR EMAILS?
LOGIN AND UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION OR SIMPLY EMAIL
newsletter@sffma.org

IN MEMORIAM

NON-LINE OF DUTY

Assistant Chief William "Bill" Perlmutter
Southside Place FD May 31, 2013

Chief Michael Paul Burns
Cockrell Hill FD May 3, 2013

Robin Nicole Allen
Mineral Wells FD September 20, 2013

LADIES AUXILIARY

Necie Roberts
El Campo VFD September 19, 2013

CERTIFICATION HIGHLIGHTS

The Certification Board introduced a new Support Staff certification in line with NFPA 1584 standards. Certification documentation and the new application form are posted on the website.

Change is constant...

With NFPA updating the 1001: Firefighter I & II standard as of 2013, the Certification Board has updates that will go into effect January 1, 2015. Two years after that, the 2017 standard will come out, requiring further moderate updates. After that point, the Board and NFPA should be on the same 4-year update schedule. As with the 2012 update, we will work with the programmers to re-credit any objectives that may be affected.

The 2013 Progress Report is due by January 31st of 2014, allowing at least a month after your department's last training session to complete the submission forms.

Kevin Creamer

Certification Administrator
kcreamers@sffma.org

The new SFFMA Building is almost complete. We plan to have a grand opening in the near future. Visit our Facebook page or website for the most updated photos and details about this event.



www.facebook.com/sffma
www.sffma.org



TEXAS EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES BOARD UPDATES

Hello to all,
As summer rolls to an end in this great state of Texas and fall begins, it reminds me of first days of school and new beginnings. It is also a great reminder to watch out for the little ones in the school zones and to remember to slow down and stop for school buses loading or unloading.

Also, all the new legislation passed by our government leaders will take place on September 1st. Among those new laws include HB 8 and Senate Bill 3556. This bill has several ramifications that will impact all areas of Emergency Medical Services in Texas. Among the highlights of the bill is the limitation of the number of services a medical director can supervise, a moratorium on certain new EMS services for one full year in Texas, and official EMS Administrator training courses. Also included are some requirements for newly organized services and for services renewing their license. This bill will impact all services in some fashion. As EMS administrators, it will do us well to read and understand the bill many weeks before beginning our renewals.

The Planning Conference for the Annual SFFMA Convention will be held in Lubbock, January 31 thru February 1, 2014. Please make plans to attend this planning meeting. We will hold a TEMSB meeting during this time.

It is also district meeting time across Texas. I encourage you to attend your district meeting and challenge you to bring a new EMS member so they may see the benefits of belonging to our organization.

We have also developed a new pamphlet outlining the benefits of belonging to TEMSB. These are made of cardstock-type material and will be very easy to distribute to your local EMS providers. We will have these available at the planning meeting as well as the Annual Conference in June. Lastly, I want to encourage every EMS provider to continue your learning long after you receive your certification. One innovative idea presented to me involved the review of one protocol every shift. Take one protocol per shift, examine the protocol, examine the medications involved in that protocol and know their intended effects, side effects, contraindications and actions on the body. It is a great tabletop learning session that will help you continue to develop your practice. Stay safe out there. Remember to buckle up. Remember to hydrate.

See you in Lubbock!

Tim Smith, BSN, RN, EMT-P
Fire Chief/EMS Director
West Carlisle Fire/EMS
Chairman, Texas Emergency
Medical Services Board

Firefighting is considered one of the 20 most dangerous professions. The EMS side of the job consists of about 80 percent of the calls a Fire Department runs. These calls include the typical bread-and-butter call a person at home not feeling well.

The members of the Texas EMS Board want each and every one of you to come home at the end of the shift.

In 2005, 62 firefighters died as a result of stress or overexertion

- 55 were as a result of heart attacks
- 6 were due to strokes
- 1 was a result of heat exhaustion.

The leading nature of fatal injuries to firefighters is heart attack (44 percent); Trauma, including internal and head injuries, is the second leading type of fatal injury at 27 percent. For firefighters who died while performing in-station duties, 69 percent were career personnel; the majority of those deaths were the result of heart attacks. Full-time career personnel account for 33 percent of firefighter fatalities; they comprise only approximately 26 percent of the American fire service. This is not a career firefighter problem. Volunteers are still 67 percent of firefighter fatalities. Thirty-eight percent of EMS operation deaths are from heart attacks.

NFPA 1582 – Recommends periodic Medical Evaluations using medical personnel familiar with the demands of firefighting and the personal protective equipment used by firefighters.

NFPA 1583 – Mandatory Exercise using a comprehensive wellness/fitness program for fire fighters to reduce cardiovascular incidents.

What are you doing for you? When I teach a class, fire or EMS, I try real hard to get it across to each student that they are number one. If you do not take care of yourself, who will? You all know the spiel, who will rescue the rescuers?

The NVFC, National Volunteer Fire Council www.nvfc.org, has a "Support the Heart-Healthy Firefighter Program", <http://www.healthy-firefighter.org>. Click on a Start A Program link and start a program at your department, start a program yourself.

EMS Conference

Just in case you are not aware, the EMS conference will be November 24-27 in Fort Worth at the Fort Worth Convention center.

Go to <http://www.texasemscconference.com> for more information.

Check your Certifications

Have you checked your recertification date lately? The certification is your responsibility, be sure to check it regularly. Go to: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/newcert.shtm> and select "Click here for live online Certification/Licensee Search"; then select "Public License Search"; then select the appropriate search. In Texas, a Texas certification is still needed to practice.

NCEMSC

Have you looked into the lower prices at NCEMSC? This is to remind that members of the SFFMA of Texas and TEMSB receive discounted prices through NCEMSC, <http://www.ncemsc.org>.

Edward Walsh FF/LP

Member, Texas Emergency Medical Services Board

THROUGH THE FIRE

By DAVID TARRANT and SARAH MERVOSH - The Dallas Morning News Staff Writers

The volunteer fire crew heard the call the night of April 17 and came together with a singular focus. In the light of day, the horror set in.



C.J. GILLASPIE, a firefighter, helps oversee rebuilding as West's public works director.

WEST - He sat alone in the dark, the tip of his Marlboro glowing red with burning ash.

After the fire and the explosion and the mushrooming black cloud that spread over the town like a shroud, C.J. Gillaspie found himself in his office. It was the one place in all of West where he could be alone.

It was several hours after he and the other firefighters had responded to the most dangerous call of their lives. Gillaspie didn't want to see anyone. He didn't want to talk, or explain what he'd seen.

Gillaspie, who is West's public works director and a captain in the fire department, had been a commander at the scene of the fire at West Fertilizer Co. that night.

He thought about the men who were like brothers, volunteers who made up West's fire department. Its 30 members include the town's constable, a pharmacist, repairmen, city employees and insurance salesmen. Across Texas, 8 in 10 fire departments are volunteer.

Each of West's firefighters wears a pager. When the dispatcher calls, they drop whatever they're doing. And they go. Most of the calls are for brush fires. Sometimes it's a two-car crash on a back country road at 3 a.m.. Whatever it is, they show up - without pay - to keep their town safe.

Because somebody's got to do it.

In a town of 2,800 residents, that's the way it is. Their mantra of self-reliance - *somebody's got to do it* - runs as deep in West as its Czech roots. Since the late 1880s, when Czechs began settling this part of Central Texas, neighbors have been helping build one another's homes. They attend birthday parties, backyard barbecues or just meet for a *pivo* - a Shiner Bock or a Bud Light.

So, in the early evening of April 17, when the dispatcher delivered the news that the fertilizer plant was on fire, the men didn't hesitate.

Gillaspie and the other firefighters, adrenaline surging, raced to the north end of town, toward a blaze like nothing they had ever trained for. They said they weren't fully



When the West Fertilizer Co. plant exploded April 17, volunteer firefighter Robby Payne was blown out of his boots, landing 30 feet away. His day job offered no escape: The funeral home he helps run handled many of the services.

aware of the dangers of the plant and the chemicals stored within.

The *Dallas Morning News* interviewed more than 20 first responders, including nearly a dozen West firefighters and medical personnel who were on scene before the explosion. Many spoke publicly for the first time, revealing the risks they faced and the horrors they experienced that night.

A beer after work

The evening had started quietly - a time for church services, athletic events and other social gatherings. Gillaspie stopped at Bud's Tiger Stop, the Exxon station just a few blocks from his office.

After work, folks often unwind in the back of the convenience store, where a few tables and chairs are set up on the black-and-white tiled floor. A big cooler filled with ice and beer advertises 16-ounce cans of Miller Lite for \$1.50. An antelope head on the wall collects dust.

Gillaspie sat at one of the round tables, sipping a Bud Light. At 32, his waist was thickening a bit. But his broad shoulders and muscular arms helped define who he was: a former tight end for his high school football team who grew up in nearby Abbott. He loved to hunt

and fish, wrestle with his kids and work with his hands. He used his vacation time to help friends bring in the harvest.

He had become an unlikely leader in the fire department. Younger than most firefighters, he seemed more comfortable sitting in the back at meetings - distracted, wisecracking, head down on his arms. But he'd keep one ear open, ready to speak up or pass on a technique, perhaps something he learned at Texas A&M's firefighter training school.

That night at the Exxon station, he got together with two fellow firefighters: Doug Snokhous, 50, a captain with a reputation as one of the fastest to respond to fire calls, and Cody Dragoo, 50, plant foreman at West Fertilizer Co..

They planned to grab a few beers, then head out to prepare a nearby dirt track for an upcoming tractor pull, one of several fundraisers the volunteer firefighters put on each year to supplement the \$4,643 they get from the city.

Gillaspie hadn't finished his first Bud Light before his pager pulsed. It was 7:32 p.m. After a series of high-pitched beeps, the dispatcher alerted them to a structure fire at the fertilizer plant.

Gillaspie turned to Dragoo. "That's your damn building, not mine. Go have fun with it," he teased. But Dragoo was already sprinting toward the door. Gillaspie and Snokhous walked outside to get in their pickups.

They saw the black smoke coiling in the sky and hurried to the station.

Answering the call

All over town, firefighters began to respond. Some were eating supper; others were watching TV or working in their yards.

Robby Payne, 51, president of West's only funeral home, was at home. Tall and lean, Payne still had the bearing of the Baylor University track and field star he'd been three decades earlier.

After a weekend golf trip with two other firefighters, Payne had forgotten to turn his pager back on. He heard about the fire when his father-in-law called and alerted him.

"I'm headed that way," Payne told him.

Payne kept his fire gear at home. He took a couple of minutes to pull

Fire was growing by the minute

on his thick boots, protective pants, coat, helmet and gloves.

At the station, George Nors, 68, the fire chief, was seated at his wooden desk. He'd stopped in only five minutes earlier to catch up on administrative work.

The chief had lived in small farming towns around Central Texas nearly all his life, except for a few years in the mid-1960s, when he enlisted in the Marines. He served in the Vietnam War, hauling supplies through the jungle in convoys of 18-wheelers. The convoys were often ambushed.

After returning home, he took a job with West's public works department and stayed for 39 years, eventually becoming director. After he retired, he took over as fire chief two years ago. He spent his time playing with his grandchildren or hanging around the fire station - his "other family," as his wife liked to say.

When the fire call came in, Nors walked into the garage, where the department's five firetrucks were parked. He wrote a message for the others on the white board: *Fire, West Fertilizer Plant.*

Doug Snokhous, who had raced over to the station with Gillaspie, was joined by his younger brother, Bob, 48. The two lived near each other, worked together at a Waco steel plant and seemed inseparable.

Morris Bridges, a newer member in the department, showed up, too. The 41-year-old had hugged his 2-year-old son goodbye before dashing to the station.

Joey Pustejovsky, 29, also arrived. The city secretary was a beloved figure in town - West's go-to guy. Between city business, fire calls and cigarette breaks, he and Gillaspie had grown close - so much so that Gillaspie was in Pustejovsky's wedding the year before.

One of the Snokhous boys got into the white truck used for brush fires. Pustejovsky jumped in the driver's seat of the red-and-white engine, the one Gillaspie usually drove. Gillaspie hopped into another engine, the red one they called "Nick" in honor of the late son of West Mayor Tommy Muska, a fellow firefighter.

The chief activated the citywide alarm system near the white board. Once, twice, three times he flipped the switch. Each time the howl of the emergency siren rang out across the town - a signal to all

residents of a structure fire.

About 7:35 p.m., the first three trucks rolled out of the station.

One after another, they zoomed past City Hall and turned right on Oak Street, into the town square. They passed The Village Bakery and Mynars Bar on the corner.

Inside Mynars Bar was Kenneth Matus, 51. He and his cousin, Jimmy Matus, worked at a company in town that built firetrucks, including

several buildings at the site. Using the water in their trucks, they tried to douse the fire that was growing stronger by the minute.

There was no fire hydrant at the fertilizer plant. Gillaspie drove "Nick" to the nearby high school, about 500 yards away, to hook up a hose to the red fire hydrant on the corner. He wheeled the firetruck through an empty field toward the massive fire. Already, its flames were shooting through



Eddie Hykel, one of the first firefighters on the scene, was seriously injured and has not been released to return to work with the West public works department. Emotions still run high, and Hykel shed tears while working in the fire station recently as he recalled moments from that night.

some of West's. After exchanging a call, the men agreed to meet at the plant to offer technical and service support.

They wouldn't be the only civilians to show up to help.

Into the unknown

As they raced toward West Fertilizer Co., the firefighters had no established plan. They would just do what they always did: show up, begin fighting the fire, then reassess.

Pustejovsky and the Snokhous brothers tended to be the frontline warriors. They usually arrived first and flung themselves into the fight. According to one oft-told story, the Snokhouses once came straight from the golf course and charged into a blaze without their bunker gear, burning the soles off their shoes.

Others, like the chief, were more likely to hang back, consult and offer direction.

That's the way it worked that night, too. At 7:38 p.m., the first wave - Pustejovsky, the Snokhouses and others - joined Drago, the plant foreman, who had come straight from the Exxon station.

The firefighters parked on either side of a burning warehouse, one of

Nors and Mitchell talked about the need to start evacuating a nursing home, apartment complex and houses near West Fertilizer Co..

But nobody was thinking about the possibility of a catastrophic explosion.

The firefighters knew in general terms that the plant also stored ammonium nitrate - but that wasn't a cause for apprehension, they thought.

Ammonium nitrate, a fertilizer ingredient whose pellets look like a fat grain of rice, is commonly used on farms around the region. But the fertilizer was never flagged as a danger at fire department meetings or local emergency response round tables.

The firefighters had always heard ammonium nitrate was a stable chemical. They said they didn't know how explosive it became at high temperatures.

West's firefighters had never trained on fighting a fire at the plant, except for a walk-through years before. On-site training wasn't emphasized in West, partly because of money and partly because there was no mandate to do so. There are no minimum training requirements for volunteer firefighters in Texas.

A breakdown in communication among federal, state and local planners also helped keep the town's firefighters in the dark about the chemical's danger.

So when the firefighters converged on the plant - Gillaspie charging across the field on "Nick," Payne arriving in his wife's Ford Expedition, and the chief bringing up the rear in the tanker - none of the men was thinking about an explosion.

But the 28 to 34 tons of fertilizer sitting in wooden bins in the plant's seed room were growing hotter, and more volatile, by the minute.

First warning

The first warning of danger came when Gillaspie drove in on "Nick." He told those battling the blaze to back up. The fire was too intense. They were too close.

the warehouse's door and roof, making a thundering sound like stampeding cattle.

At 7:41 p.m., Gillaspie called for backup.

When Chief Nors got there about 7:45 p.m., he checked in with his assistant chief, Emanuel Mitchell, who had arrived in his own vehicle. The two of them were worried about the smoke blowing northwest over a residential area.

They were even more worried about the numerous tanks of anhydrous ammonia stored at the plant.

Anhydrous ammonia is a fertilizer kept under pressure in liquid form. If it leaks into the air, it becomes a potentially lethal gas. Over the years, the fire department had been called out several times when pop-off safety valves leaked.



The massive explosion on April 17 set off a shockwave that shook the town of 2,800 residents, damaging building and injuring hundreds of people, some blocks away.



The fertilizer plant site smoldered the day after the fire. A breakdown in communication among federal, state and local planners kept firefighters in the dark about the danger.

Gillaspie left "Nick" down by the fire. He took off in another truck, intending to hook it up to the same hydrant by the high school and push more water back to the firefighters.

Payne, the funeral director, also stopped to talk with the men fighting the fire on the south end of the warehouse. He cut across the yard to the north end, where another truck was located. Second only to the chief in years of experience in the department, he planned to tell anyone near that truck to back up while they figured out what to do next.

Nors arrived in only a T-shirt, jeans, a ball cap and boots. He usually didn't wear his fire gear, since his job was to stay back and direct. But even 50 yards away, he felt the extreme heat of the fire.

After talking with the assistant chief about evacuating residents, Nors walked up closer to the fire to consult with Drago, the plant foreman. Drago thought that the fire was too big to extinguish, that they should let it burn out.

So, by about 7:50 p.m., about 12 minutes after the first crew had arrived, the firefighters had agreed on a plan: Back off from the fire and evacuate nearby residents.

But other first responders were still pouring in. Emergency medical personnel had already arrived for backup. Four firefighters from neighboring departments who had been attending an EMT training class in West responded to the call. They sprinted toward the fire. An off-duty Dallas firefighter rushed over from a nearby cookout.

Kenneth Matus saw Drago talking on a cellphone and his cousin Jimmy taking a video. Kenneth heard loud popping and crackling noises. It looked like the warehouse was about to collapse. He moved around to the passenger side of "Nick," the side farthest from the flames. Somebody - probably the assistant chief - urged everyone to back

up. They needed to move fast. The firefighters started picking up their hoses. One of the Snokhous brothers got behind the wheel of "Nick," but in his hurry forgot to disengage the pump as he put the truck in gear, causing the gears to grind loudly.

Then, as if some invisible fuse had burned down, the fire became a bomb. The blast gave off an earsplitting crack, followed by a sonic boom. Flames and smoke rocketed hundreds of feet into the air.

It was 7:51 p.m., just 13 minutes after the first firefighters had arrived on scene.

The explosion

The explosion created a crater 93 feet wide and 10 feet deep and knocked over residents standing in their yards a half-mile away. The U.S. Geological Survey registered the force of the blast as a 2.1 magnitude earthquake.

A cloud of smoke swallowed the plant. Dust and debris rained down on the first responders, men and women who had just come out to help.

Bloody and wounded, survivors crawled or stumbled away from the epicenter. The smell of ammonia burned in the air. Small fires littered the grounds. Tires popped. Fuel tanks ruptured.

Payne was blown out of his rubber boots. He went flying backward, landing 30 feet away. He lost his helmet. His jacket ripped apart. He landed unconscious, slumped against a barrel-shaped tank that held liquid cattle feed. The molasses-like fluid oozed over him on impact, matting his hair and coating his body.

Brad Wines, whose father is a firefighter and one of Payne's closest friends, raced to the scene looking for his dad. He found Payne instead.

Wines hollered and shook him. Payne woke up and felt a sharp

pain in his right shoulder and chest. As Wines helped him to his feet, Payne repeated the same question: "Where am I? What happened?"

Chief Nors heard the blast before he felt it. He woke up with gravel all over his head, as if someone had rubbed his face all over the ground. He lost his glasses and his hearing aids. Blood seeped from his left ear.

Another firefighter had been hit by a railroad cross tie. He ignored his injuries to help the chief over to the tanker. The blast had riddled the back of the chief's legs with debris. He had bruises and swelling on his legs, back and shoulders.

Still, Nors forced himself to get up and trudged toward the high school.

Gillaspie had just arrived at the fire hydrant near the high school when the plant exploded. A blast of hot air knocked him to the ground.

Lying on his back, he noticed that the foot-tall grass in the pasture was flattened.

"What the hell? What the hell?" another firefighter screamed.

Gillaspie scrambled to his feet and ran back toward the plant.

He remembered that a call had

been sent out for reinforcements. He grabbed his radio and hollered at the dispatcher. "Nobody needs to be coming down here," he shouted. "We don't know if something else is fixing to blow."

As he ran, he choked on the billowing smoke and dust. He saw Nors stumbling toward him. Gillaspie told him that ambulances were on the way. He wasn't sure if the chief heard him.

Gillaspie caught sight of Mitchell, who is black. He was covered in dust - "as white as me," Gillaspie recalled. Mitchell, crying, said he had warned the firefighters to pull back.

"I told them not to be up there," he said. "I told them. I told them."

Gillaspie looked down at the ground and saw Kenneth Matus on a stretcher, waiting for an ambulance. Matus was likely the closest to the explosion to survive. The truck had shielded him from the worst of the blast, but it ripped his clothes off. Only his left sleeve and collar were left.

Gillaspie kept moving. He picked his way around the twisted metal

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24



Residents of West gathered for a prayer service and candlelight vigil at St. Mary's Catholic Church of the Assumption in West on April 18.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Dear SFFMA Members, As you know SFFMA is the oldest and largest fire service organization in Texas. We serve over 22,000 members and over 1,300 departments each year. There are lots of reasons why members join SFFMA. Whether it is for the AD&D/LODD policy, legislative efforts, tradition, member discounts, or even just to help the fire service. They are all extremely great reasons to join, but possibly the greatest one is SFFMA's recognized firefighter Certification Program. Why is the certification program important? SFFMA's greatest efforts have been to maintain a network of people that work together to ensure the safety of Texas firefighters, so this year VFIS of Texas has moved us one step closer to achieving this goal. VFIS of Texas will be generously sponsoring a Firefighter Safety & Training Grant that will encourage all departments to participate in training, and hopefully prevent fire service-related fatalities.

The grants will be awarded to reimburse departments for the cost of certification dues/ fees and/or travel expenses to attend trainings that are recognized, and leading toward a certification. Not only is training eligible, but so are SFFMA Individual dues! Being an individual member of SFFMA counts as participation toward a certification program (with department affiliation), and this grant would cover your expense! We hope that you participate in the Firefighter Safety & Training grant program, because this will ensure your department's commitment to safety and professionalism, and if done through the SFFMA Certification Program,

it will insure each of your firefighters with a \$5,000 AD&D and LODD benefit. Go to page 5 to read more about the grant program through VFIS of Texas.

Members in SFFMA reap benefits all-year round, not only because of training opportunities and a great certification program, but we constantly work to get our members SAVINGS! Recently we added a few new benefits to an already extensive array of discount services. Assets In Order wishes to share Legacy Lockbox, a one-of-a-kind service, to our members. This ingenious service allows you to store, organize and access your personal and financial information in one place, and provides access to your loved ones when it counts. It's like a digital safety deposit box, easily accessible from your own home. Not only do they know the importance of protecting important personal information, documents, assets, etc.. but they understand that our members need to ensure their own family's security when they're protecting their community and putting their own lives at risk. Please read more (pages 20 and 22) about how you can get your FREE Legacy Lockbox!

Looking for a cheaper phone plan? How about one that pays you? Well you're in luck because SFFMA has partnered up with Solavei, where you can get UNLIMITED voice, text and data with NO CONTRACT! Not only that, but every time you get three people to join Solavei, you get \$20 a month! How about that? Ask about how you can get compensated for sharing Solavei, and read page 12 for further details.

And that's not all....How would you like a discount

on your monthly electricity bill? You may be eligible for a discount through Stream Energy. See page 12 for details. Lastly, American Income Life has joined the SFFMA Benefits family. Please see page 20 for more details on their program and benefits. A recent mail-out related to their benefits went out over the last few weeks. Remember that each member should have a beneficiary form on file, and if you have not filled one out, please contact me about it. We will provide the form to you via email. We want to make sure your AD&D and LODD beneficiaries are recorded.

In other exciting news, 2014 will mark one of the biggest transitions in SFFMA history. Our new SFFMA headquarters will be completed, new training opportunities & department grants, a new

updated website with new functionalities, various new benefits, an updated SFFMA Certification Program, and last but not least, a cool-new-extra-durable SFFMA membership card. Check out the new design! We hope you like it! It will be made out of a hard plastic material, and have a durable topcoat to ensure it is water and fade-resistant.

As always, any questions and concerns about Membership, Dues, Payments, and Donations, can be directed to Diana Cardona, dcardona@sffma.org

Take care!



Diana Cardona
Membership Coordinator

New Membership Card Design



State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas			
CERTIFICATION CODES			
M1-4	Module 1-4 Completion	ISO	Incident Safety Officer
FF1-2	Full Firefighter I & II	PIO	Public Information Officer
FM	Master Firefighter	O1-2	Fire Officer I & II
FW	Wildland Fire Fighting	VX1-3	Vehicle Extrication Tech I, II & III
DO	Driver/Operator	TFA	Technical Rescue Apprentice
ND-3	Instructor Dept, I, II & III	RT1-2	Rope Rescue Tech I & II
PE1-2	Public Fire Educator I & II	WT1-2	Wilderness Rescue Tech I & II
FI/AI	Fire/Arson Investigator	TEL1-2	Telecommunicator I & II
FN	Fire Inspector	SUP	Support

If you purchased the extended benefits indicate here for your own record

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www.sffma.org

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MEMBERSHIP TYPES

	DEFINITION	BENEFITS	DUES (January 1st - December 31)
DEPARTMENT	A regularly organized fire department, consisting of any combination of personnel with apparatus properly manned and officered, with sufficient personnel to operate such apparatus in the prevention and extinguishment of fire. Each department is eligible to appoint a maximum of five members from their department to vote at convention. The dues of each department are to be according to last federal census, and on a staggered amount according to the population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in the SFFMA Certification Program Access to Members-only SFFMA Online for reporting training Notifications about upcoming SFFMA events Annual subscription to printed magazines and electronic newsletters Eligible to maintain a roster of individual member activity and participation in SFFMA 	Prices for Communities of the following population ranges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$95 for 0-1,750 \$135 for 1,751-5,000 \$155 for 5,001-10,000 \$175 for 10,001-20,000 \$195 for 20,001-30,000 \$220 for 30,001-40,000 \$245 for 40,001 and over
INDUSTRIAL FACILITY	An industrial facility membership consists of facilities that participate in the Texas Industrial Emergency Services Board Training Program, Vehicle Registration Program, or the Volunteer Firefighters' and Fire Marshals' Certification Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notifications about upcoming SFFMA events Annual subscription to printed magazines and electronic newsletters Eligible to maintain a roster of individual member activity and participation in SFFMA 	\$120 annual dues (required) Participation Prices: (optional) Total # number of employees/contractors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$270 for companies with 0-200 \$395 for companies with 201-500 \$520 for companies with 501-1000 \$695 for companies with 1001-1500 \$770 for companies with 1501 or more
FIRE MARSHALS' OFFICES	Fire Marshals' offices, when duly certified by their political sub-division, are eligible to membership to this Association.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in the SFFMA Certification Program Access to Members-only SFFMA Online for reporting training Notifications about upcoming SFFMA events Annual subscription to printed magazines and electronic newsletters Eligible to maintain a roster of individual member activity and participation in SFFMA 	\$95 annual dues
ORGANIZATION	The regularly organized district, county, rescue association, industrial, and other fire service organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notifications about upcoming SFFMA events Annual subscription to printed magazines and electronic newsletters Eligible to maintain a roster of individual member activity and participation in SFFMA 	\$120 annual dues
SUSTAINING	Manufacturers, jobbers, distributors, and/or sales personnel of fire apparatus, equipment, and accessories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligible to contract for exhibit space at the annual training conference and convention Eligible for advertising and sponsorship opportunities that reach all members. Notifications about upcoming SFFMA events Annual subscription to printed magazines and electronic newsletters Eligible to maintain a roster of individual member activity and participation in SFFMA 	\$170 annual dues
INDIVIDUAL (WITH DEPARTMENT AFFILIATION)	Any person interested in the fire service, who is affiliated with a member department, may become an individual member of this Association, which includes the eligibility of any benefits which may be available to individual members. This member is eligible to participate in the SFFMA Certification Program, and can opt into the VFIS Optional Extended Benefit Policy for an additional \$10, and/or the NVFC membership for \$15.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AD&D and LODD of \$5,000 Discounts to all Loyalty/Affiliate programs SFFMA has available (see Membership Benefits List for complete list) Discounts on SFFMA Conference Registration Discounts on Training Material from SFFMA Store Free SFFMA Publications Access to SFFMA Online system for viewing certification/training summaries 	\$30 annual dues
INDIVIDUAL (NO DEPARTMENT AFFILIATION)	Any person interested in the fire service or in supporting fire service issues may become an individual member of this Association, which includes the eligibility of any benefits which may be available to individual members. This member is NOT eligible to participate in the SFFMA Certification Program, as they are not on a department roster.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AD&D and LODD of \$5,000 Discounts to all Loyalty/Affiliate programs SFFMA has available (See Membership Benefits List for complete list) Discounts on SFFMA Conference Registration Discounts on Training Material from SFFMA Store Free SFFMA Publications 	\$30 annual dues

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS



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MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS



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Another \$500 is donated to Texas Wildfire Relief Fund

Phone: 512.470.2277



Enjoy your stay at any La Quinta Inn & Suites hotel when you use your member discount!

SFFMA Members can get at least 10% off their nightly rate by providing unique promocode and presenting their SFFMA ID Card at Check-In.

Promocode: SFFMA10 and/or TXSTAT10



Get professionally monitored home security for \$10 a month, with a 36-month contract.

Discount on monthly service. Customized pricing for system that best suits your home security needs.

Phone: 800.615.4225



North Central EMS Cooperative assist members in providing cost-effective, quality service by negotiating discounted contracts for EMS equipment & supplies from different vendors.

Ask about the complete list of vendors today! Don't pay retail for anything from ambulances to uniforms with NCEMSC.

Phone: 888.603.4426
Email: office@ncemsc.org
www.ncemsc.org



Become a member of NVFC to take advantage of an increased AD&D and LODD benefit, member access to NVFC website and resources, and discounts.

Join NVFC for \$15 a year; \$1 goes back to SFFMA. Includes a \$10,000 AD&D and \$20,000 LODD benefit.

Contact: membership@sffma.org for more details and how to sign up.



SFFMA members never have to pay retail again for admission to Six Flags Fiesta Texas.

Admission is \$35.50! That's 1/2 off the regular price!

Tickets must be purchased online.
Email: membership@sffma.com to request promocode.



Solavei rewards you for using your cell phone! Join Solavei and pay only \$49 a month for UNLIMITED, voice, text & data, then earn when you pass the information along to your friends!

No Contract, no hidden fees, just \$49 a month for Unlimited voice, text and data. Add three people to your Solavei Network and earn \$20 a month! Add nine people and your monthly bill is PAID IN FULL!

<http://www.solavei.com/txfirefighters>



New or existing customers can save with Sprint.

Restrictions may apply. 23% off select plans. Everything Unlimited plan not eligible for discount. Primary account holder must be an SFFMA Member.

Contact membership@sffma.org for discount information.



Lower your energy costs by switching your provider to Stream Energy and receive discounts on your monthly

bill! The Power Up Program helps SFFMA's various funds and programs while providing you savings.

Check if Stream Energy is an energy provider in your area! Ask membership@sffma.org about enrolling in the Power Up Program!

Phone: 866.447.8732
Email: customerservice@streamenergy.net
www.sffma.streampowerup.biz



Target solutions delivers innovative applications that help fire departments run more efficiently. Accredited Training for EMS continuing education. Track and record hands-on-training, there's no software necessary!

Receive up to a 30% discount on Prevention Link Professional Online Training!

Jason Finley
Phone: 858.376.1619
Email: jsf@targetsolutions.com
www.targetsolutions.com



Texas

Fire Facilities Fund™

TFFF is dedicated to providing the most cost-effective financing and expertise to fund your fire station and equipment.

Contact the Government Capital Corporation about the TFF Fund and let them know you are an SFFMA Member.

Phone: 800.883.1199
www.govcap.com



Thrifty.com has great online deals that vary throughout the year. Don't pay full price for your auto rental when you are an SFFMA member!

Contact membership@sffma.org for your promocode, limited time offers for certain deals and promocodes apply.



New or existing customers activating a new line of service can save when with T-Mobile!

T-Mobile offers: Waived Activation fee, additional 10% off qualifying monthly recurring charges, free shipping and more!

Contact membership@sffma.org for information on Promocodes/discounts for T-Mobile accounts.



VFIS is the largest insurance, education and consulting services provider to emergency services organizations in Texas. SFFMA has a longstanding relationship with VFIS of Texas, and we trust they can fulfill any department's insurance need.

Ask about their coverage packages that include Accident & Sickness Insurance, Liability, Property, etc.

Phone: 800.252.9435/ Fax: 512.448.9929
Email: vfisoftexas@vfistx.com / www.vfistx.com

MEMBERSHIP TYPES

	DEFINITION	BENEFITS	DUES (January 1st - December 31)
INDUSTRIAL INDIVIDUAL	Any person interested in issues pertaining to TIESB may become an Industrial member of this Association, which includes the eligibility of any benefits which may be available to individual members.	<p>This member is eligible to participate in the SFFMA Certification Program. The Texas Industrial Emergency Services Board has been formed to address the needs of Industrial firefighters in Texas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AD&D and LODD of \$5,000 • Discounts to all Loyalty/Affiliate programs SFFMA has available (see Membership Benefits List for complete list) • Discounts on SFFMA Conference Registration • Discounts on Training Material from SFFMA Store • Free SFFMA Publications • Access to SFFMA Online system for viewing certification/training summaries 	\$30 annual dues
EMS INDIVIDUAL	Any person interested in issues pertaining to TEMSB may become an EMS member of this Association, which includes the eligibility of any benefits which may be available to individual members.	<p>This member is not eligible to participate in the SFFMA Certification Program (because it pertains only to fire-related Certifications). The Texas Emergency Medical Services Board has been formed to address the needs of Texas EMS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AD&D and LODD of \$5,000 • Discounts to all Loyalty/Affiliate programs SFFMA has available (See Membership Benefits List for complete list) • Discounts on SFFMA Conference Registration • Discounts on Training Material from SFFMA Store • Free SFFMA Publications 	\$30 annual dues
INTERNATIONAL INDIVIDUAL	Any person who does not reside in Texas or in the continental U.S. interested in eligibility of any benefits which may be available to individual members, can join the Association. Their program is presided over by the SFFMA International Committee.	<p>This member is eligible to participate in the SFFMA Certification Program (available in Spanish), and modified to apply outside of Texas. This program does NOT certify an international Firefighter in Texas. However, it does provide proof of compliance with the same SFFMA program guidelines used by Texas volunteers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AD&D and LODD of \$5,000 • Discounts to all Loyalty/Affiliate programs SFFMA has available (See Membership Benefits List for complete list) • Discounts on SFFMA Conference Registration • Discounts on Training Material from SFFMA Store • Free SFFMA Publications • Access to SFFMA Online system for viewing certification/training summaries 	\$30 annual dues

LIFE MEMBER

This membership is limited to all past presidents of the Association who upon expirations of the terms of office (six years), become life members. They are entitled to vote on all matters. This member is exempt from payment of association dues and annual conference and convention registration fees.

HONORARY MEMBER

This membership is for those who are not affiliated with a member department, but whom the Association desires to honor in recognition of service to SFFMA. They shall not be entitled to vote nor be eligible to hold office. This member is exempt from payment of association dues; however they must pay annual training conference and convention registration fees.

HONORARY LIFE MEMBER

This membership is granted to people the Association wishes to honor in recognition of distinguished, meritorious, or long, faithful service to SFFMA. They are entitled to vote. This member is exempt from payment of association dues; however they must pay annual training conference and convention registration fees.



MEMBER PRICING (STORE/CONFERENCE)

Get discounts on Training Books from different publishers. We offer the best prices for our members!

Julie Beauchamp
Ph. 512.454.3473 ext.905
E. sales@sffma.org

Get discounts on Training when you attend SFFMA Conference just for being a member. Save from \$50 to \$100 on the price of Main Conference registration. Contact: membership@sffma.org

TEXAS

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS
RELIEF FUND

16th Annual Parade of Lights

SUNDAY - December 1, 2013

START @ 5:00 PM
Track 21 Parking Lot 448-AA
4815 Hwy 6 @ Loch Katrina
Houston, TX 77084

END
Cy-Falls High School
9811 Huffmeister Road
Houston, TX 77095

TROPHIES AWARDED AT END OF PARADE FOR THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES:

- Judges Choice
- Fire Engines
- Wreckers
- Motorcycles
- Hard Luck Award
- Rescue Trucks
- Commercial Vehicles
- Longest Distance
- Ambulance
- Aerial Trucks
- Floats
- Specialty*

*(any other vehicle not listed above)

Judging begins at start of parade route! All participants must be in place no later than 5:00 pm.

Hot Chocolate, Cookies and other refreshments along with shirts and caps will be available to purchase at the end of the parade.

PLEASE NO SANTAS....HE IS ALREADY SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE.



CONTACT US FOR MORE
INFORMATION:
Parade Hotline: 281.831.4523
Email: TVFFRF@gmail.com
Website: www.tvffrf.com

CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
Texas VFFRF
PO Box 214
Cypress, TX 77429

Texas Volunteer Firefighters Relief Fund

By Rodney Crosby, President

What happens when a catastrophic event happens to a volunteer? The Texas Volunteer Firefighters Relief Fund, Inc. was established to help those who help others. We raise money throughout the year to assist in a time of catastrophe; the death of a volunteer, a family member, or the loss of their home due to fire or flood. The Relief Fund provides short-term assistance in many ways. Sometimes just being able to drive someone to an important appointment or simply holding the hand of a grieving person can be the very best support that we are able to give.

In most areas throughout Texas, Volunteers provide fire protection and emergency medical service. These men and women work full-time jobs during the day or night and come out to help in their communities at all hours. They sometimes work without sleep to make sure that a damaged roof was covered or someone's personal treasure was secured.

Like any charitable organization, the Relief Fund relies solely on the generous contributions and help of the community. In addition, we have special fundraising events during the year. With assistance from individuals and organizations like you we will be successful in bringing our community together, and you will help us help our own.

2013 SUSTAINING MEMBERS

Below is an alphabetical listing of current SFFMA Sustaining Members. Sustaining Membership is available to any company interested in exhibiting at the SFFMA Annual Conference. Please keep these companies in mind when purchasing new apparatus, equipment and services.

A

ACS FIREHOUSE Solutions

ROGERS, MIKE
10051 Barton Cir
Frisco, TX 75035-6667
Phone: 888.941.3473
Email: mike.rogers@acs-inc.com

Advanced Rescue Systems

WILLIAMS, BRYAN
3459 FM 36 S
Caddo Mills, TX 75135-6773
Phone: 903.527.3841
Email: advancedrescue@hotmail.com

AG-Meier, Inc.

RAY, A. C.
920 East 6th Avenue
Belton, TX 76513-2712
Phone: 254.939.3731
Email: fireami@vvm.com

Air Cleaning Technologies, Inc.

DUNCAN, DAVE
1300 W Detroit St
Broken Arrow, OK 74012-3625
Phone: 918.251.8000
Email: info@aircleaningtech.com

Akron Brass Co.

RUDY, ZACH
PO Box 86
Wooster, OH 44691-0086
Phone: 800.228.1161
Email: zrudy@akronbrass.com

American Signal Corporation

RIESELBACH, ROB
8600 W Bradley Rd
Milwaukee, WI 53224-2816
Phone: 800.243.2911
Email: rrieselbach@americansignal.com

America's Command Training**

COLURCIELLO, JOSEPH
194 Mineral Springs Rd
Lockhart, TX 78644-4196
Phone: 512.801.2666
Email: act_1@att.net

AmeriDoc

WHITEHEAD, ELIZABETH
14785 Preston Road, Ste 975
Dallas, TX 75254-6878
Phone: 469.814.8716
Email: ewhitehead@ihipins.com

Applied Force Technologies

WATKINS, BOB
2409 Colleen Dr
Pearland, TX 77581-5403
Phone: 832.289.2135
Email: bob@appliedforcetech.com

B

Buckstop Truckware Inc.

HARTFIELD, SHAWN
1125 Industrial Parkway
Newberg, OR 97132-7437
Phone: 503.554.0001
Email: shawn@buckstop.biz

BWA - Boynton-Williams & Associates

BOYNTON, JAY
4455 Lyndon B Johnson Fwy Ste 820
Dallas, TX 75244-5917
Phone: 972.661.5461
Email: jay@bwaarchitects.com

C

California Casualty

ALMEIDA, LISA
PO Box M
San Mateo, CA 94402-0080
Phone: 866.680.5143
Email: bwatson@calcas.com

Casco Industries

MURRAY, RAYMOND
607 W 62nd St
Shreveport, LA 71106-2913
Phone: 800.551.8787
Email: raymond@cascoindustries.com

Chief Fire & Safety Co. Inc.

PAYNE, RICHARD
927 S 4th St
Chickasha, OK 73018-4655
Phone: 405.224.2596

Consolidated Traffic Controls, Inc.

AYERS, DAVID
1016 Enterprise Place
Arlington, TX 76001-7140
Phone: 817.265.3421
Email: president@ctc-traffic.com

D

Deep South Fire Trucks, Inc.

TAYLOR, RONNIE
8202 Redchurch Dr.
Spring, TX 77379-7165
Phone: 601.722.4166
Email: cronnetaylor@yahoo.com

Del Mar College- Regional Fire Academy

THIEME, WALTER
101 Baldwin Blvd
Corpus Christi, TX 78404-3805
Phone: 361.698.1724

Department of Inner City Emergency Response

WILLIAMS, WILMA
PO Box 8408
Houston, TX 77288-8408
Phone: 832.352.6192
Email: wwilliams1@in-cert.com

E

E.D. Bullard

BARNETT, STEVE
1814 Bayou Breeze Dr
Baytown, TX 77523-8448
Phone: 713.384.3028
Email: steve_barnett@bullard.com

Emergency Response Solutions - Texas

RIGGINS, REID
6700 Woodlands Pkwy Ste 230-204
The Woodlands, TX 77382-2575
Phone: 281.796.7556
Email: reidriggins@erstexas.net

Emergency Services Insurance Program - ESIP

DIXON, BILL
PO Box 5670
Cortland, NY 13045-5670
Phone: 800.822.3747 Ext 125
Email: wdixon@mcneilandcompany.com

Extraco Insurance

RICE, JUDY
18 S Main Street Fl 7
Temple, TX 76501-7652
Phone: 254.774.5905
Email: jrjrice@extracobanks.com

F

Ferrara Fire Apparatus, Inc.

HURST, ROBIN
PO Box 249
Holden, LA 70744-0249
Phone: 225.567.7100
Email: robinh@ferrarafire.com

Fire & Safety Specialists, Inc.**

EWALD, BART
540 Graham Rd
College Station, TX 77845-9661
Phone: 979.690.7560
Email: nvfd144@gmail.com

Fire in Texas **

GOTHARD, RONNIE
PO Box 3063
Kilgore, TX 75663-3063
Phone: 903.845.3473
Email: dedee@fireintexas.com

Fire Supply Inc.

MCKITTRICK, RICH
PO Box 89
Godley, TX 76044-0089
Phone: 817.389.2377
Email: rich@firesupplyinc.com

Firehouse Trophies and Gifts

MORGANS, KAY
12525 Skyline Dr
Jenks, OK 74037-4917
Phone: 918.528.6119
Email: morgansk@cox.net

First In Software

DOCKINS, JOEY
12934 Youngfield Dr.
Cypress, TX 77429-3847
Phone: 832.250.1172
Email: joey.dockins@firstinmap.com

Fisher Sportswear

FISHER, BARRY
6672 Lincoln Dr
Philadelphia, PA 19119-3118
Phone: 215.755.8565
Email: barry@fishersportswear.com

Foam Pro

SMALL, CHUCK
11650 S Ridgeway Dr
Willis, TX 77318-5464
Phone: 936.697.3626
Email: chuck.small@pentair.com

Fuego International, LLC

HIDROGO, JOE
8101 Cameron Rd Ste 101
Austin, TX 78754-3816
Phone: 512.490.1480
Email: joeh@fuegostore.com

G

Global Traffic Technologies

WAID, CHANCE
7800 3rd St N Ste 100
Saint Paul, MN 55128-5452
Phone: 214.548.2497
Email: chance.waid@gtt.com

Government Capital Corporation

REESE, SHEILA
345 Miron Dr
Southlake, TX 76092-7826
Phone: 800.883.1199
Email: sheila@govcap.com

Gulf State Safety, LLC (Fire Fighter Tool Supply, Inc.)

DAVIS, RAYE JEAN
9103 Boudreaux Rd
Tomball, TX 77375-7402
Phone: 281.631.0588
Email: rj@gulfstatesafety.com

H

Hall-Mark Fire Apparatus Texas LLC

HOLMES, MARIA
601 Martin Duke Rd
Van Alstyne, TX 75495-2824
Phone: 713.962.9708
Email: mholmes@hall-markfire.com

Hazard Control Technologies, Inc.

STRAHAN, TED
1617 Mineral Springs Dr
Allen, TX 75002-0617
Phone: 469.316.1173
Email: tstrahan@hct-world.com

Hooks N Irons Training LLC

DAHLVIG, JON
1523 Steamboat Trail
Lewisville, TX 75077-7540
Phone: 972.743.4697
Email: hooksniron@yahoo.com

Hoyt Breathing Air Products

HOYT, PETE
PO Box 653
Quinlan, TX 75474-0011
Phone: 903.447.3385
Email: lhoyt4033@aol.com

I

IamResponding.com

SEIDBERG, DANIEL
PO Box 93
Syracuse, NY 13214-0093
Phone: 315.701.1372 ext. 23
Email: dseidberg@emergencysmc.com

Independent Insurance Agents of Texas

VANDELINDER, DAVID
1115 San Jacinto Ste 100
Austin, TX 78701-1994
Phone: 800.880.7428
Email: ltimm@iaat.org

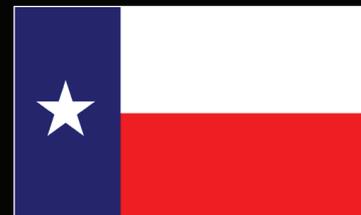
Industrial Safety Training Council

PHILP, JIM
324 N Memorial Fwy
Nederland, TX 77627-7150
Phone: 409.833.2378
Email: jim@istc.net



TetraKO™

ATTACK. SUPPRESS. CONTAIN.



TEXAS COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT FUNDS AVAILABLE SOON!

The newly approved Texas CEF (Community Enhancement Funds) Grant monies will soon be available! These 100% reimbursement grant monies are ideally suited for rural Texas fire departments that desire to ramp up their wildfire protection capabilities. And the TetraKO® wildland firefighting system is pre-approved for the CEF monies.

TetraKO Technology

At the heart of the system is TetraKO water enhancer, a product that has undergone extensive and successful testing in Texas. TetraKO is far superior in fighting fires because its proprietary dual thickening agent allows it to adhere and stay where applied. When heated by fire, TetraKO becomes even thicker and releases a cooling steam that dramatically aids fire suppression. TetraKO is the first product of its type that contains no super absorbent polymers, and it is environmentally friendly.

Tested at TEEX

TetraKO testing at the TEEX Product Development Center compared TetraKO side by side with plain water and with Class A foam. The result: fire knockdown testing found that TetraKO yielded a nearly 91% efficiency increase over water alone, and an 86% increase over Class A foam.

TetraKO Wildfire Protection System

The TetraKO Wildfire Protection System originated in response to requests from Texas Fire Departments to develop an integrated firefighting package that takes advantage of the many firefighting benefits of TetraKO technology. The products include the TetraKO TurboMixer system and/or the TetraKO Wildland Skid, and easy-to-mix TetraKO powder concentrate.

The TetraKO TurboMixer facilitates large-batch mixing of TetraKO powder concentrate into water – for storage in the system tank, or immediate offloading of mixed TetraKO solution into any fire apparatus. The TetraKO TurboSkid unit is designed for placement on the flatbed of a pickup truck or on a trailer. The TurboSkid comes equipped with a 200-gallon tank and an 18 HP pump.

Limited Time Promotion Offer

The first 50 Texas fire departments that apply and are approved for funding will receive a bonus of on-site training and a supply of TetraKO water enhancer powder. Those who purchase a TurboSkid system will receive enough TetraKO powder to provide 2,000 gallons of mixed solution, or the equivalent of 20,000 gallons of water. Those who purchase the TurboMixer system will receive enough TetraKO to provide 3,000 gallons of mixed solution, the equivalent of 30,000 gallons of water.

For more information on the TetraKO Wildfire Protection System, and to see videos of TetraKO in action, visit www.tetraKO.com.

For CEF grant timing and application information, and product pricing, visit: www.tetraKO.com, or call **612-230-3550**.



The TetraKO TurboSkid (left) and TurboMixer.

2013 SUSTAINING MEMBERS

I

Insurance Services Office, Inc.
BRADLEY, PHILLIP
4030 W Braker Ln Ste 350
Austin, TX 78759-5353
Phone: 512.440.9914
Email: pbradley@iso.com

Intermedix
COGGINS, ERIN
6451 N Federal Hwy Ste 1000
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33308-1424
Phone: 954.308.8700
Email: erin.coggins@intermedix.com

J

Jacobs-Weber, Inc.
HULL, PATRICK
PO Box 67
Yoakum, TX 77995-0067
Phone: 361.293.3557
Email: phull@jacobs-weber.com

John Wright Associates, Inc.
WRIGHT, JOHN
1111 W Abram St
Arlington, TX 76013-7324
Phone: 817.459.2001
Email: jill@johnwrightassoc.com

Jones and Bartlett Learning
ROONEY, BRIAN
5 Wall St Fl 3
Burlington, MA 01803-4700
Phone: 978.579.8154
Email: brooney@jblearning.com

K

Kidde Fire Safety
ZIPSER, NEAL
1016 Corporate Park Drive
Mebane, NC 27302-8368
Phone: 919.304.8264
Email: neal.zipser@kiddeus.com

Kimco Services, Inc.
KIMMEL, ROY
103 Oyster Creek Dr # 3
Lake Jackson, TX 77566-4157
Phone: 979.297.9246
Email: kimco@kimco-services.net

Kirkpatrick Architecture Studio
NOBLES, TERRY
100 West Mulberry St
Denton, TX 76201-6010
Phone: 940.387.8182
Email: info@k-a-studio.com

Knapheide Truck Company
PIKE, TIM
398 N Interstate 35 Service Rd
Red Oak, TX 75154-4248
Phone: 972.617.3770
Email: tpike@knapheide.com

Knox Company
HELLER, REBBECA
1601 W Deer Valley Rd
Phoenix, AZ 85027-2112
Phone: 623.687.2300 x 505
Email: cjones@knoxbox.com

L

LaQuinta Hotel Management
ALLEN, KATHERINE
2220 Pine Thicket Lane
Bedford, TX 76021-2542
Phone: 972.505.4507
Email: katherine.allen@laquinta.com

LION
HORN, JENNIFER
7200 Poe Ave Ste 400
Dayton, OH 45414-2547
Phone: 972.772.8796
Email: cparkinson@lionprotects.com

Lonestar Fire Specialties
ALEXANDER DALE
3809 Little Valley Ct
Granbury, TX 76049-6225
Phone: 817.219.2354
Email: dale@lonestarfirespecialties.com

M

Masimo
CONNAY, STEVE
40 Parker
Irvine, CA 92618-1601
Phone: 949.297.7000
Email: sconney@masimo.com

Medic-CE.com
EZZEDDINE, RICHARD
PO Box 540141
Houston, TX 77254-0141
Phone: 877.458.9498
Email: mcesales@medic-ce.com

Metro Fire Apparatus Specialists, Inc.
MINTON, JIM
10940 W Sam Houston Pkwy N
Ste 325
Houston, TX 77064-5769
Phone: 281.517.0911
Email: jminton@mfas.com

**Micro-Blaze® Microbial Products
(Verde Environmental, Inc.)**
SCOGIN, JENNIFER
9223 Eastex Fwy
Houston, TX 77093-7001
Phone: 713.691.6468
Email: jscogin@micro-blaze.com

Morton Buildings, Inc.
JOHNSTON, KURT
8840 FM 2920 Rd
Spring, TX 77379-2201
Phone: 281.374.0490
Email: kurt.johnston@mortonbuildings.com

**MES - Municipal Emergency
Services**
ALLEN, BRENT
16511 Hedgecroft Dr Ste 200
Houston, TX 77060-3622
Phone: 800.784.0404
Email: ballen@mesfire.com

Muscular Dystrophy Association
BAKER, ED
12655 North Central Expressway
Ste 235
Dallas, TX 75243-1707
Phone: 972.669.3892
Email: ebaker@mdausa.org

N

National Fire Safety Council
COOK, LINDA
PO Box 378
Michigan Center, MI 49254-0378
Phone: 517.764.2811
Email: conventions@nfc.org

Neel Fire Protection Apparatus
LEDNICKY, CLAY
1118 Interstate 35 N
Waco, TX 76705-2834
Phone: 800.433.3402
Email: neel@texnet.net

P

Philadephia Insurance Companies
GOFF, LANCE
3939 Belt Line Rd Ste 650
Addison, TX 75001-5842
Phone: 469.221.7932
Email: lgoff@phlyins.com

Powell & Leon LLP
CLARK, ANDREW
1706 W 6th St
Austin, TX 78703-4703
Phone: 512.494.1177

Provident Insurance
D'IPPOLITO, DAREN
272 Alpha Dr
Pittsburgh, PA 15238-2934
Phone: 800.447.0360
Email: ddippolito@providentbenefits.com

S

Safety and Fire Education Training
TITTEL, DEACON
400 Rivershore St
Highlands, TX 77562-2509
Phone: 281.932.0891
Email: safet4u@gmail.com

Scott Safety
ROBERTSON, MARK
1618 Ash Meadow Dr
Houston, TX 77090-2352
Phone: 281.537.0570
Email: marobertson@tycoint.com

Sealegs of Texas
HOPKINS, MIKE
PO Box 1
Brenham, TX 77834-0001
Phone: 979.836.2022
Email: mike.hopkins@sealegsoftexas.com

Sharp Testing Services, Inc.
SHARP, STEPHEN
9506 Miller Rd
Magnolia, TX 77354-3434
Phone: 281.356.1235
Email: ssharp@sharptesting.com

Shell Pipeline Company LP
BARKER, PHILLIP
404 Jefferson
Pasadena, TX 77506-3145
Phone: 713.423.3382
Email: philip.barker@shell.com

**Siddons-Martin Emergency
Group**
GIVLER, KIRK
14233 Interdrive W
Houston, TX 77032-3323
Phone: 800.784.6806
Email: kgivler@siddons-martin.com

Simplex Grinnell
RODRIGUEZ, FRANK
8323 N. Eldridge Pkwy Ste 120
Houston, TX 77041-1300
Phone: 281.671.3256
Email: frodriguez@simplexgrinnell.com

Spartan Chassis, Inc.
HUSSEY, ANDREA
1541 Reynolds Rd
Charlotte, MI 48813-2040
Phone: 517.543.6400
Email:
Andrea.Hussey@spartanmotors.com

**Specialized Billing & Collection
Systems of Texas**
GLOVER, BRUCE
14340 Torrey Case Blvd Ste 300
Houston, TX 77014-1033
Phone: 281.397.0397
Email: bruce@specializedbilling.net

**State Association of Fire &
Emergency Districts**
AVERY, CLIFF
PO Box 676
Pflugerville, TX 78691-0676
Phone: 512.251.8101
Email: safed@texas.net

Steele Fire Apparatus
STEELE, BILL
806 N 1st St E
Haskell, TX 79521-6238
Phone: 940.864.2208
Email: bill@sfbrushfiretrucks.com

Sutphen
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ANNOUNCEMENTS



ASSETS IN ORDER DONATES LEGACY LOCKBOX HERITAGE MEMBERSHIPS TO SFFMA MEMBERS IN TEXAS

Recognizing the invaluable service that Texas first responders provide to their communities, Assets In Order, a Houston-based company and the creator of an online legacy planning and storage service, Legacy Lockbox, is donating a one-year Heritage membership of the service to all current SFFMA members statewide. The donation is valued at more than \$396,000.00.

Legacy Lockbox enables members to organize and update their assets and personal information in a single, secure place for future access by themselves or designated loved ones when needed. Members can store a wide variety of files ranging from their will, life insurance documents and financial account information to social media passwords, favorite photos, family mementos, pet directives, final wishes and even personal messages. Legacy Lockbox enables the lockbox owner to designate loved ones and friends to receive specific content should the lockbox owner pass. The online service includes 1GB of storage and is protected by 256-bit encryption, equal to security levels used by banks and other major financial institutions. The creator of Legacy Lockbox hopes it offers first responders some peace of mind.

"This year, we've seen a tremendous amount of casualties among first responders across the U.S. and especially here in Texas," said David Harris, CEO and founder of Assets In Order. "Every morning when a Texas first responder hero wakes up, they don't know what their day will bring. My desire is to provide these brave men and women, who risk their lives daily, with a convenient and cost-free way to feel more secure knowing that they have planned ahead for their families. I know first-hand that planning ahead for your family shows you care." Harris created the Legacy Lockbox after he was diagnosed with a life-threatening illness, and then

experienced the unexpected loss of a family member and was unable to find that family members' important documents. That experience and his own need for a legacy planning tool fueled his desire to develop the Legacy Lockbox and found his company, Assets In Order.

"We are honored to accept this donation as a benefit for our members," said Chris Barron, executive director of SFFMA. "Our first responders give their all to the communities they serve. Assets In Order understands what our heroes do and recognizes the importance of these great men and women and their families."



SFFMA members can gain access to their free one-year Legacy Lockbox Heritage membership by visiting www.assetsinorder.com/SFFMA. Members will need to provide Assets In Order with their name, email address and their SFFMA membership ID number to access their free coupon code. For questions related to signing up for the Heritage membership, members can contact Assets In Order at **1-888-840-1213**. To learn more about Assets In Order visit www.assetsinorder.com.



AMERICAN INCOME LIFE
insurance company

New Member Benefits at No Cost!

Through a partnership with American Income Life Insurance Company, additional benefits are being provided to all members of the State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas.

A letter regarding these benefits is being mailed to you. Make sure to return the reply card naming your beneficiary.

BENEFITS INCLUDE:

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An AIL representative will contact members who return the reply card to arrange a convenient time to deliver their benefits and review other supplemental insurance benefits that may be available.

Bereavement Uniform Program

'Taking Care of Those Who took Care of Us'™

After 15 years, the Lighthouse Uniform Company's Fallen Fire Fighter Dress Uniform Program has dropped the LODD requirement and is making a dress uniform for burial purposes available to any family needing one. We call this new program the Bereavement Uniform.

It is a collaborative effort between the Fire Service and the Lighthouse Uniform Company. It calls for departments and firefighters to check their 'closets' for dress uniforms 'surplused' or no longer fitting and to send them in to the Lighthouse.

The Lighthouse cleans, refurbishes, reconfigures to rank, and makes them available to any family requesting one for burial purposes, at 'no cost' to the family. The only charge is for freight which will be billed to the affiliated department.

The Bereavement Uniform Program does not live on the Lighthouse website.

To insure easy, timely access for all your people and to keep the program at the top of Internet searches, please add this hyperlink <http://bereavement.lighthouseuniform.com/> to your department's website. There is, of course, neither cost nor obligation.

<http://bereavement.lighthouseuniform.com/>

For more information, to join the SFFMA, National Volunteer Fire Council, the Federation of Fire Chaplains, and numerous departments already involved, or to engage the program, to donate or to receive a Bereavement Uniform, call us at **800-426-5225** (Seattle time).

Very best regards,



Steve Cohen, President
Lighthouse Uniform Company
Home of the Bereavement Uniform Program



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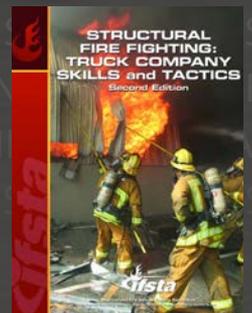
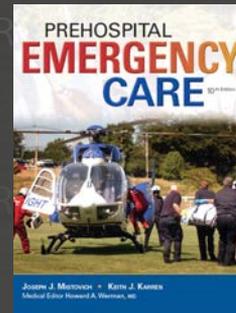
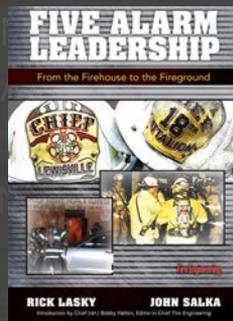
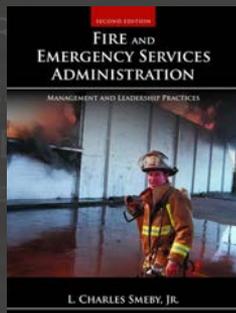
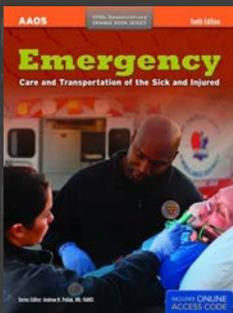
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FEATURED ARTICLE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

and burning ember. The blast had shoved "Nick," the fire engine, back about 10 feet. Its blown-out side panels hung like broken wings.

He hoped he might still find a firefighter alive, perhaps pinned under debris. But he saw no more survivors - only the remains of friends beyond help.

"I started to see things I didn't want to see," he recalled. "So I turned around and walked out."

The next morning

At sunrise, authorities had a preliminary understanding of what had been lost. Eventually, the numbers would stagger them.

Fifteen people killed - 12 first responders and three civilians. At least 300 injured. An apartment complex, nursing home, three schools and hundreds of homes were damaged or destroyed beyond repair.

Property damage was estimated at \$100 million.

Over the next two weeks, the people of West and nearby communities came together to bury their dead. These included five of West's firefighters: Joey Pustejovsky, Cody Dragoo, Morris Bridges, and Bob and Doug Snokhous.

The four firefighters from nearby towns who left the training class in West to rush to the fire were killed: Kevin Sanders, Perry Calvin, Cyrus Reed and Jerry Chapman.

Three other first responders also died: Capt. Kenneth "Luckey" Harris Jr., the Dallas firefighter; Buck Uptmor, who owned a fence-building business and died trying to rescue horses from a corral near the fire; and Jimmy Matus, who came to offer technical support for the firetrucks he'd helped build.

Funerals took place nearly every day. Most were held at St. Mary's, the big Catholic church in town. Mourners crammed into pews, shoulder to shoulder, while an overflow crowd stood in the back or outside.

Nors, his left arm in a sling, attended every funeral. Robby Payne, hospitalized for almost two weeks, got permission from his doctors to attend the memorial service at Baylor University, where President Barack Obama spoke.

Aderhold Funeral Home, which Payne runs with his older brother, handled the memorial services and burials for many of those who died. That number of services would have put an incredible strain on any small-town funeral home. It was even worse for Aderhold because Payne's



George Nors, the West fire chief, spends each day repairing his home, then returns to his daughter's home where his grandchildren Katie Watson, 2 and Kyle Nors, 4 like to assist him with his socks and shoes. "That's what keeps me going," Nors said of his grandkids. "They just make me happy."

'Just gotta be strong'

injuries and recovery left him unable to work for months.

By mid-June, Payne was limping around his office in a boot cast. He had torn ligaments and tendons in his left ankle.

Most of his injuries, though, were on his right side, where his body had smashed against the tank. He suffered major nerve and muscle damage from his right elbow to his shoulder. He also had broken bones on the right side of his face, several chipped teeth and a broken ear drum, which would require surgery.

He remembers little of what happened in the minutes just before and after the explosion. He ended up at Hillcrest Hospital in Waco and didn't hear about the deaths until two days later, when a fellow firefighter broke the news.

His body is healing faster than his psyche. "I'll lay down every night and cry," Payne said. "It's devastating to lose so many at one time."

Finding refuge

Chief Nors has found refuge in his family. His home was heavily damaged by the blast. He and his wife, Fran, are living with their daughter, her husband and their three kids. His son, who filled in as chief while he was injured, and his other daughter visit often.

The blast triggered traumatic memories from Nors' time in Vietnam. After the war, he had nightmares. He was so jumpy that he once knocked Fran down when she approached from behind to give him a tender squeeze.

Back then, he received no counseling or

therapy. The military didn't formally recognize post-traumatic stress as a medical diagnosis until the 1980s.

After the explosion, the nightmares returned. His sleep was restless. As Nors rebuilt his home, the bang of a falling board could reflexively send him to the ground. This time around, though, Nors said he got some counseling. He learned that the more he opens up, the less he dwells on losing the firefighters he thought of as sons.

Early on, though, the onslaught of media coverage caused Nors and other firefighters to retreat in silence. For months, a "No Press" sign hung from the fire station doors. The firefighters needed time to heal, and it was hard to do so in public.

Mayor Tommy Muska became a de facto department spokesman. He handled most questions, like how much the firefighters knew about the plant and about autopsy reports that showed two firefighters had violated the department's policy by responding with elevated blood alcohol levels that night.

"They went there to protect the town," Muska told The News earlier this month. "In my opinion, they are still heroes. In my opinion, they used their best judgment."

Nors did say that it's important to do more training. "You can't really ever train enough," he said.

Nors has slowly returned to the fire station, wearing his familiar Vietnam veteran baseball caps, driving his 1982 powder blue Ford F150 with a U.S. Marine Corps sticker on one window and a West Volunteer Fire Department sticker on the other. He and his wife spend nearly every day helping the workers who are rebuilding their house.

But what calms Nors most is spending time with his grandchildren.

He likes to watch them play in their sandbox, push them on swings or take them for rides in his golf cart. Andrew likes to sleep on cushions next to them in the living room at night, while Nors and his wife - Papa and Mimi - sleep on the recliners. Katie, the littlest one, is silly and makes her grandfather laugh. And every morning, she insists on helping him put on his socks and shoes.

"That's what keeps me going," Nors said of his grandkids. "They just make me happy."

C.J.'s long walk

On that Wednesday night, after surviving the explosion only to find his friends' bodies, Gillaspie walked around town in a daze.

He saw the destroyed apartment complex and nursing home and the houses burning on Reagan Street. People ran past him looking for loved ones. Others pushed nursing home residents in wheelchairs toward the football field.

He kept walking until he got to his house, a few blocks west of the fertilizer plant. The house was destroyed, but he was relieved to find that his wife and two kids were safe.

He sent his family to a relative's house. Then he headed to his office near the town square, about a mile away. He had stripped down to his yellow firefighter pants and a T-shirt. Every few minutes, someone pulled alongside him to offer a ride. He kept walking.

Inside his office, he sat down at the desk and lit one cigarette after another, listening to the sirens from all the backup fire departments and ambulances that came to help West that night. He couldn't cry.

In the weeks that followed, he attended funeral after funeral. At Joey Pustejovsky's, he presented his friend's firefighter helmet to the family.

"Just gotta be strong," he told himself. "Just gotta be strong."

He's reluctant to second-guess the firefighters' actions the night of the explosion. The volunteers did the best they could.

"You have a fire of that magnitude, your adrenaline's rushing. You're not thinking about this thing exploding," he said. "You're not thinking about how much ammonium nitrate is in there. Or what's in there that's combustible. . . . You don't think about any of that."

But he said more training would have helped. It might have given them more information and a better understanding of what they were up against.

Two-thirds of West's fire department had or were in the process of getting the basic certification recommended by the State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association. But beyond drills and practicing on equipment, Gillaspie would like to see the West volunteers train at every big business and school in the town.

"You've got to do this stuff once a year so it stays halfway fresh in your mind," he said. "You do it every 10 years, well, hell, you ain't gonna remember none of it."

As West's public works director, Gillaspie has logged grueling hours at work as he helps oversee just about everything associated with rebuilding West. He also has fire department and City Council meetings to attend. He has his house to rebuild. His phone rings constantly. He has no time for what he loves, like spending time with his kids - 5-year-old Ethan and 2-year-old Anslee.

He suspects the trauma will probably catch up to him at some point. "We've had people come through here who want to sit down and talk to us," he said. "Therapists."

He finds distractions instead: another cigarette break, a drink with his buddies, a country music concert.

But every building permit that crosses his desk is a reminder of the damage the explosion inflicted. Every day, he thinks about how he used to walk across the street to City Hall to chat with his friend Joey Pustejovsky. Every night, he returns to a tiny rent house instead of his home.

He wishes he hadn't seen what he saw after the explosion, but he can't turn back the clock. What he can do is help rebuild West. It won't be the same as it was. But he's a doer and a builder, and the only thing he can do is to keep doing and building.

A few weeks ago, his home was bulldozed. He bought the lot next door, and is going to rebuild bigger and better - four bedrooms, three baths.

"Gotta get a new house built," he said.

He reached for his pack of Marlboros and headed out the door to a spot of grass in the shade. ■

Special thank you to the Dallas Morning News for permission to reprint this article.

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WEST EXPLOSION - FIRST RESPONDERS WHO GAVE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE



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Kevin Sanders
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Volunteer
Firefighter



Doug Snokhous
West Volunteer
Firefighter



Robert Snokhous
West Volunteer
Firefighter



Buck Uptmor
First Responder

RELIEF TO WEST VFD



SFFMA played an important part of the relief efforts in West, TX. With board members providing support to the fire department by being on the scene right after the event, the SFFMA Office offered and helped coordinate numerous fundraising activities for the community. Fundraisers and claim checks from Volunteer Firemen's Insurance Services of Texas, Texas Pipe Works, Inc., Golds Gym of Houston, SCM Promotions, and George O's of Waco were delivered to West totalling over \$250,000. Other special events also took place such as the

Wrestling for West ProWrestling event, fun runs held in other states, etc.; all raised money for this devastated town. A tender was donated by Siddons-Martin Emergency Service Group and a fire truck from a Texas Rangers baseball player Lance Berkman were just a few of the types of donations received.

It's nice to see communities and fire departments come together to help out one another during times of need. The responses from departments across the state and country to give equipment, assist with station staffing, etc., all represent why we are in the emergency services profession. **Thank you for what you do!**

Pictured from left to right: Barbara Marzean (VFIS of Texas President), Chris Barron (SFFMA Executive Director), George Nors Sr. (West VFD Fire Chief), Sammy Owen (George's Restaurant), Brad Berger (SCM Productions), Chris Kehl (Texas Pipe Works) and Bryan Murphy (Gold's Gym Houston).

The A & M Golf Tournament, benefitting the SFFMA West Volunteer Fire Department Relief Fund was held on Saturday, July 20th at the Briarcrest Country Club in Bryan/College Station. Fifty-six (56) golfers enjoyed an afternoon of golfing, eating beef and pork fajitas sponsored by Government Capital Insurance. When signing in each golfer received a goody bag and when leaving they were each given a mug with Special Rescue & Fire Service, LLC on one side and A & M Golf Tournament 2013 benefitting SFFMA West Volunteer Fire Department Relief Fund on the other. Total amount collected for West VFD was \$5,500. Thank you everyone who participated!

TEXAS FIRE FACILITIES FUND CELEBRATES SEVEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY

In 2006, the SFFMA created the Texas Fire Facilities Fund (the "Fund") which is administered by Government Capital Corporation. It was created specifically to address the challenge members were facing when seeking new financing. Prior to creating the Fund, many emergency services departments needed new facilities or needed to expand or renovate existing structures, but had not been able to do so due to financing obstacles. In some cases, members had also arranged financings at higher costs as a result of not taking advantage of the specific financing structures designed for the unique needs of the fire services industry. Even today, the traditional financing sources don't offer the flexibility and customized financing solutions many in the industry need. The SFFMA's Fund continues to provide fire departments with the professional industry-focused expertise and very competitive cost structures they expect. The SFFMA and its members also win when they participate in this financing program since the Fund makes a donation to the SFFMA Fire Programs Institute/J. C. Swadley, Jr. Fund for each completed transaction.

Since its inception in 2006, the Texas Fire Facilities Fund has assisted many SFFMA members with approximately \$50 million in real estate and equipment financing transactions. In addition, the J.C. Swadley, Jr. Fund has received numerous contributions from the Fund.

CURRENT INTEREST RATES ARE STILL LOW, BUT FOR HOW LONG?

In early 2012, interest rates on U.S. Treasury Securities (a common benchmark for all debt instruments) reached an all-time low. These interest rates along with residential mortgage rates, prime rates and municipal borrowing rates have remained low for some time due to the actions of the Federal Reserve Bank to stimulate the economy. However, these historically low rates have been escalating rapidly in 2013, and will most likely continue their trend upward. The window of opportunity to purchase and finance much needed emergency services equipment at the historically low tax-exempt interest rates still exists, but like all good things, may eventually come to an end.

The Texas Fire Facilities Fund, an exclusive SFFMA member benefit program is ideally positioned to work side by side with Texas fire departments to take advantage of all financing opportunities. Whether it's finding a way to affordably finance new stations, or refinance existing debt, you should consider the program's interest-saving benefits as well as the other no-cost benefits including:

-  Preservation of tax exempt status
-  Elimination of personal guarantees
-  Budget workshops and affordability consulting
-  Use of time-saving documents approved for use state-wide
-  References to architects and other professionals utilized on similar projects in your area

The SFFMA Fire Facilities Fund was formed by the SFFMA for the specific purpose of helping its members understand and navigate the unique requirements and borrowing authorities applicable to the Texas fire service community. If you have not yet contacted the Texas Fire Facilities Fund, today's interest rate environment may be just the reason to do so.

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By Xavier J. Garcia

August 17, 2012
Poteet, TX - Structure Fire
Trini Bosquez, PVFD
Taking a break after putting out fire. Trailer in background complete loss.

FIRE RELATED ACTS



1st Place - Lauralee Veitch
Community VFD



2nd Place - Xavier J. Garcia
Pleasanton VFD



3rd Place - Jim Hanson
Ovilla FD

LIFE SAVING ACTS



1st Place - Debbie Conard
Richardson FD



2nd Place - Charles Krampota
Alvin FD



3rd Place - Trish Cook
Seabrook VFD

EDUCATION AND PUBLIC SAFETY



1st Place - Charles Krampota
Alvin FD

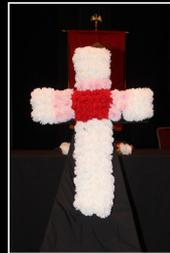


2nd Place - Trish Cook
Seabrook VFD



3rd Place - Charles Krampota
Alvin FD

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- The Woodlands Fire Department
- Gulf Coast/Tri-Rivers District
- Jim Hanson - Photography
- Lloyd Klatt - Videography
- TEEX Staff - Training and AV equipment
- SFFMA Executive Board & Staff
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- All committee members & attendees



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Prescribed fire helps manage Texas landscapes, keeps habitats and vegetation balanced

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — Less than two years removed from the worst wildfire season in Texas history, it's no wonder that when fire is mentioned the first thing that comes to most Texans' minds is fear. However, fires aren't always bad. In fact, they can boost the health of the land.

For generations, Texans have used prescribed—or "good"—fire to help manage the landscape, depending on the flames, to clear brush, control vegetation, maintain wildlife habitats and even boost nutrients in the soil.



Prescribed burning is done by experienced professional and certified, insured prescribed burn managers under the guidance of a burn plan.



Commissioner Todd Staples said. "In Texas, we must be strategic with stewardship of the land and resources. It takes everyone coming together—first responders, local and state officials, public land managers and private landowners—to keep our landscapes healthy, and our citizens and communities safe."

According to state officials,

prescribed burning isn't just good for the land, it's also good for people. Prescribed burning doesn't eliminate wildfires, but the strategic reduction of brush and other vegetation can decrease the intensity of wildfires when they do ignite. "Prescribed burning helps reduce the risk of potential wildfires that may threaten lives and damage communities, crops, livestock, and wildlife," Sonora AgriLife Extension Center Superintendent Butch Taylor said.

Texas A&M Forest Service supports the use of prescribed fire and conducts burns on public lands. Landowners interested in learning more about prescribed fire and its applications may visit the Prescribed Burn Alliance of Texas website at <http://pbatexas.org>.

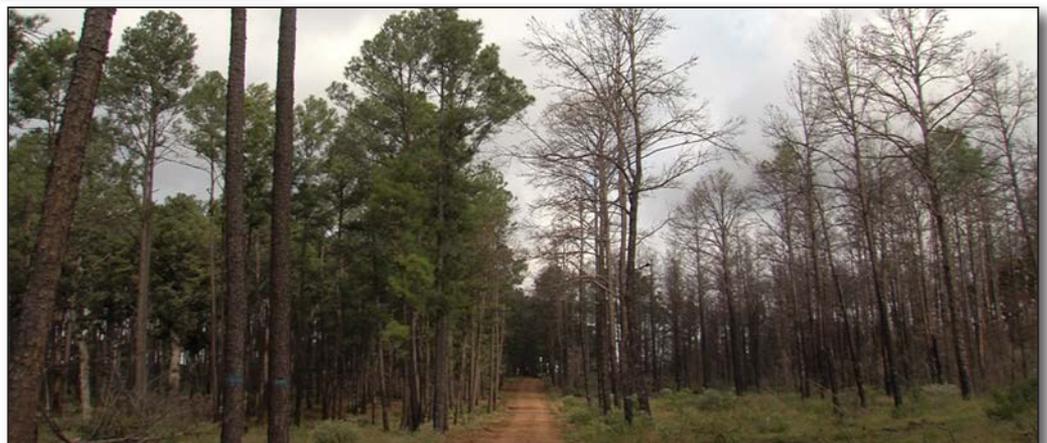
"Our goal here at Texas A&M Forest Service is to provide information, tools and technical assistance to residents across the state to help them better manage their tree resources and protect themselves," Texas A&M Forest Service Director Tom Boggus said. "That's what we are doing with this video. If we can help Texans be better land, tree and resource managers, we can help Texans better protect Texas."

Watch the video and find other prescribed burning resources at <http://TexasPrescribedFire.com>.

Texas A&M Forest Service is joined by the Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in releasing the video *A Land in Balance: Benefits of Prescribed Fire*.

This 15-minute video is designed to raise awareness about the benefits of fire on the land and illustrates the utility of prescribed burning across different regions of Texas, how these fires are conducted and the benefits derived.

"Prescribed burns save lives and are critical tools for private landowners to protect property," Texas Agriculture



This is Bastrop State Park, one year after the Bastrop County Complex wildfire in Sept. 2011, that burned 34,000 acres countywide including 96 percent of the park. The wildfire burned through the entire area pictured. The land on the right side of the road had not been previously treated with prescribed fire. The intensity of the wildfire reached extreme heat, burning through the canopy and killing the trees. The area on the left side of the road had been treated multiple times (every three to four years) with prescribed fire. With minimal understorey and brush to burn, the wildfire dropped to the ground and reduced intensity, traveling along the ground. The trees are still green and the forest remained relatively intact.



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SFFMA INTERNATIONAL



2013 has been a really progressive year for the SFFMA International program.

We have been working hard on marketing our newly available SPANISH TRANSLATION of the SFFMA Certification Program. We are getting more and more interest in training participation from members around the world.



July 3rd-5th, SFFMA was invited to attend the American Firefighter summit in the ATLAPA Convention Center in Panama City, Panama. The conference hosted by the Organización de Bomberos

(OBA), an international firefighter organization with delegations from 11 countries. We were very fortunate to have been invited to this Panama conference, where we worked with Rotunno Investments, who provided us an exhibitor space to market SFFMA and develop business relations with many international fire chiefs that attended. We thank them for their generous hospitality, and will be working with them in the future to develop more participation and membership in Panama.

The response in Panama was overwhelmingly positive, as their firefighters are very interested in becoming members of SFFMA.

You might be asking "why"? It's because SFFMA is becoming a leader in certification and training. Our program provides an easy-to-use structure, and a ready-made guideline for developing a path toward certification in other countries. Panama, and other Latin-American

countries are realizing the importance of tracking firefighter certification and training, and they invest a lot to get the most current information and keep up with applicable NFPA standards.

As a result of our efforts we have doubled our International membership this year to approximately 200 members and growing.

As you know, we organize a small conference in conjunction with TEEX, in January every year. We saw an increase in participation at last year's conference, so we will be having it in McAllen, Texas, once again. Thanks to the Rio Grande Valley fire departments' hospitality, the International Conference



2013 International Conference in McAllen, TX

will be held January 15-18th, 2014. We will be offering some hands-on and lecture courses in Spanish, for anyone interested in attending. The cost is \$150 per member and training applies toward SFFMA Certification. For more information on this please contact international@sffma.org. Our time and effort in the SFFMA International program has been growing steadily and we know our members are eager to see what's next.

We believe that with the SFFMA database/system upgrade, we will be able to offer more benefits online, and offer a better network for our international members.



for hosting SFFMA at the conference in Panama.

Cheque Facebook en "SFFMA of Texas International" para más informes!

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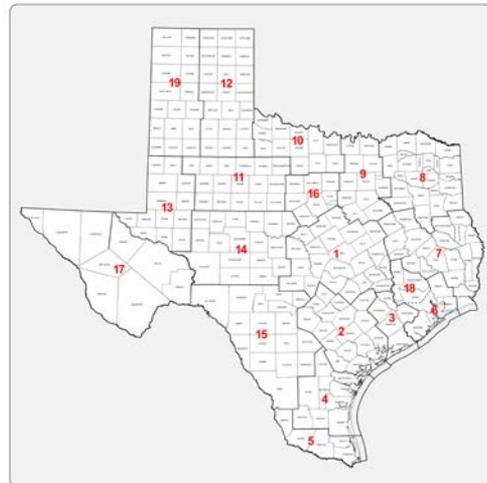
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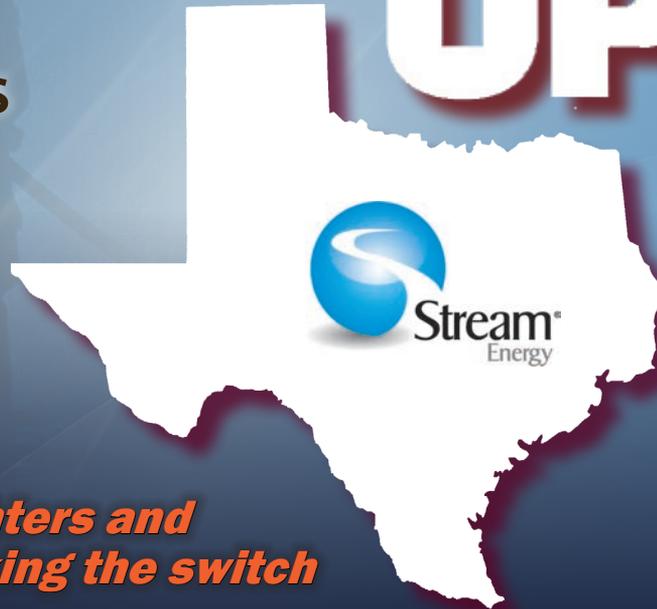
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2013 Firefighter of the Year

Dennis Gage

Kilgore FD

2013 EMS Responder of the Year

Edward Konick III

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4TH VICE PRESIDENT
STATE FIREMEN'S & FIRE MARSHALS' ASSOCIATION

I am not running for office... I am running for you!

I will assist SFFMA in the challenges for the future. Texas has long set the standard for the fire service in this country. I am asking for YOUR VOTE and YOUR SUPPORT in June, so together, we can continue to set the standard.



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- Health and Safety Committee
- FF II/Paramedic/Registered Nurse
- Instructor I
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FIRE MARSHAL'S COMMITTEE UPDATE

The certification board updated the Fire Inspector certification requirements to meet the NFPA standards. These requirements meet the same standards as the Texas Commission on Fire Protection. To certify as a Fire Inspector one of the following curriculums must be met:

- 1) NFPA 1031: Fire Inspector I, Fire Inspector II, AND Plans Examiner I
- 2) TCFP Fire Inspector curriculum.

Please take time to read the letter from the State Fire Marshal's Office discussing the line-of-duty deaths (LODDs). This is one of the worst years in Texas history. (available at www.sffma.org)

The TBFFA Conference is Austin October 21-25, 2013 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Austin.

SFFMA and the Fire Marshal's committee would like more attendance at the planning session and the conference in June. The members of the Fire Marshal's Committee want everyone to go home. Please be safe out there.

Edward Walsh FF/LP - Fire Marshal's Committee

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Neither should you.
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I would like to start off thanking everyone for their support and kind words of encouragement as I start my year as your Texas Firemen's Auxiliary President. I feel honored to be here and look forward to working with everyone as we move forward to improve TFA. I would also like to thank the Alvin Volunteer Fire Department Ladies' Auxiliary, Alvin Volunteer Fire Department, and the Gulf Coast/Tri-Rivers District for their

support through this journey. I especially want to thank my family - Gene, Kylie and Dawson. It is through their support and understanding that I am able to perform this job. I love you guys very much!

My focus for TFA is to get back to the basics and focus on what TFA was originally founded for as we move forward with advances in technology. TFA was originally organized on June 15, 1949, for the purpose of promoting closer friendship and understanding among the ladies and wives of Texas Firemen. As time went on, our by-laws were drafted and changed to our current day purpose: to promote the interest and welfare of the State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas; to become better acquainted and promote better friendship among the wives, daughters, sister, and mothers of Texas firemen; and to assist in every way possible in the organization of firemen's auxiliaries. Everyone's input on how to help us achieve this goal is more than welcome. It will take all of us in this organization to work together to get there.

Plans are already under way to make the 2014 convention a success. SFFMA President Gardner and I are working together to make sure the convention is successful. TFA 2nd Vice President Locknane has been working hard on the luncheon. She has some wonderful ideas and I have full faith the luncheon will be enjoyed by all.

Other news, the TFA Board has welcomed newly appointed Chaplain Mary Jane Cargile.

I want to assure everyone that this board is working together for the best interest of TFA. Everyone on the board is here to serve the membership of TFA. If anyone has any questions or comments, please feel free to contact us.

Again, I consider it a privilege to be your TFA President and will always cherish the friends I have made through the years.

See you in Lubbock!

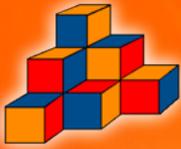
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Pam Maples
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2013-2014 TFA Executive Board

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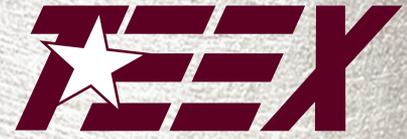
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