

October 2014 / VOLUME 49

# TEXAS FIREMEN

The Magazine for Emergency Professionals



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# 2015 SFFMA PLANNING CONFERENCE

## JANUARY 23 - 24, 2015 - Galveston, TX

### Host Hotel

Moody Gardens Hotel, Spa and  
Convention Center  
Seven Hope Blvd  
Galveston, TX 77554  
Ph. 409.741.8484

Room rate: \$119 + tax  
(room/night)

**GROUP BLOCK IS  
CURRENTLY FULL.**

**Annual Conference  
June 12-17, 2015**

Check for conference updates at [www.sffma.org](http://www.sffma.org).



### TENTATIVE AGENDA

#### Friday, January 23

8 a.m. - noon TIESB Meeting  
1 - 5 p.m. SFFMA Executive Board

#### Saturday, January 24

8:30 a.m. Golf Tournament Committee  
8:30 - 10:30 a.m. Constitution and By-laws Committee  
Pumper Race Committee  
Fire Marshal Committee  
Finance Committee  
8:30 a.m. - noon Certification Board  
Ladies Auxiliary Board  
9 - 10 a.m. Sergeant-at-Arms Committee  
11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Poster Committee  
Exhibits Committee  
Memorial Committee  
Driving Contest Committee  
EMS Committee  
T\*Flag Committee  
12:30 p.m. Speaker Selection Committee  
1 - 2 p.m. LUNCH (not provided)  
2 - 3:30 p.m. District Officers Meeting  
3:30 - 4 p.m. June Conference Agenda Review  
3:30 - 5 p.m. Health and Safety Committee  
4 - 4:30 p.m. Site Selection Report

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Texas Firemen is published once a year in the fall. Any person interested in the emergency services may become an individual member of this association by the payment of annual dues in the amount of \$30 per year (January - December) which includes individual membership and allows for eligibility of benefits, including a subscription to this magazine. *Advertising rates are available upon request or may be found online at [www.sffma.org](http://www.sffma.org).* SFFMA and the Texas Firemen assume no responsibility for statements made by contributors. Advertising in Texas Firemen does not imply approval or endorsement by the SFFMA.

#### Photo Credits

Front Cover - Blackburn Photography  
Page 1 - [www.moodygardens.com](http://www.moodygardens.com)  
Page 2 - Molly Quirk Photography  
Page 15 - Lary Jones, AEP/ETT  
Page 23 - Thomas McDonald, Friendswood FD  
Pages 3, 5, 18, 27 and 51 - Jim Hanson



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Hello SFFMA Members,  
 It is nice to see that the fall season will soon be arriving, and maybe we will see some cooler temperatures and hopefully some much-needed rain!  
 The 2014 summer was a busy one for SFFMA...

**Executive Director's  
 CORNER**

We started off in June with our annual conference, which was a great success. The quality of the classes that were taught, the hospitality received from the Panhandle district and local departments, and the overall program was a positive thing for our association. From there we went into assisting with and participating in the various annual fire schools in College Station, with staff working our trade booth during the Spanish and municipal fire schools along with Executive and Certification Board meetings. During the time between conference and fire schools, SFFMA's website went through a major upgrade and rewrite. An updated database was launched allowing for all staff to have the ability to update the website's content with current news and events quickly rather than relying on a single webmaster. More importantly, the new database/website allows for our members to have a friendlier experience when logging in, purchasing materials and signing up for events. It also allows for the capabilities to donate directly online, have a social networking board, and several other features we are still learning about. The website will continue to change and improve as we learn more about all of the different features but we are glad we have a much more technology-stable website for our members.

As we go into the fall season, the certification staff is working on preparing for the mandatory testing of firefighter certifications in partnership with TEEEX. TEEEX will be hosting regional testing dates/locations across the state to allow for numerous opportunities for firefighters needing to test. Staff are also testing a new certification module that

is directly connected with our master database and we plan to implement the certification module as soon as it is tested and programmed for our needs.

We want to thank all of you who have donated to our Capitol Monument Expansion Project. We are very pleased and proud to report that, as a team, we have met our goal of raising \$150,000 in 150 days. Unfortunately, as things often go with big projects, we've come across another obstacle in the expansion process. The State Preservation Board, which has the ultimate authority and charge of caring for monuments upon capitol grounds, has recently informed us that a readjustment to the build estimate has been made. Folks, to put it simply—we're going to have to raise some more money ... but what a better group to take on this challenge than the first responders of the great state of Texas? So in the coming months, we will re-strategize our fundraising efforts for this project until we find ourselves on the avenue leading to successful completion of the expansion. And we will get there, because the honor and memory of the brave men and women who have given their lives in the protection of others, must be permanently recognized. Please stay tuned for updates, and remember—this setback is just another opportunity to show how determined and accomplished the SFFMA has always been and will continue to be, because we get where we're going *together*.

As we go into the 2015 legislative session, our focus will be on the legislative priorities of the association: protecting the grant funds dedicated to VFDs and increasing the funding to the full level for the dedicated grant programs. Our T\*Flag representative will have an article in this magazine with the details of our legislative priorities for the next session.

We always welcome your comments, concerns, questions, and compliments on how we are doing and what else we can do for you as our members.

Be Safe,



**Chris Barron**  
 Executive Director

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Well, my year as president of this great association is here. I am grateful to the membership for giving me this opportunity of a lifetime. I value my service to the membership and pledge to always remember who gave me this opportunity.

I grew up in Copperas Cove, Texas. At that time, it was a small community of military families located about 60 miles northwest of Austin, and bordering Fort Hood on the west. My family settled there well before World War II, after emigrating from Germany. I remember my grandmother had a collection of Methodist hymnals in their house that were in the German language. Most of my family and relatives still reside there and continue to raise their families in Copperas Cove. My grandfather (we called him Dad) was one of the founding members of the Copperas Cove Volunteer Fire Department. My dad (E.C.) followed in his footsteps and joined the volunteer fire department as a young man, eventually becoming fire chief in the late 60s. My dad also served as president of the Central Texas District in 1980. My uncle, Grafton Seale, became the first paid fire chief in the early 70s and served in that position for a couple of years, just long enough to hire me into the fire department in 1973.

I joined the fire department as a volunteer in 1970 while still in high school. I remember making trips to

## President's FORUM

the Central Texas District meetings from Fredericksburg to Brenham and everywhere in between. In those days the Central Texas meeting began on Saturday evening with a dance and Sunday was for meetings and pumper races. As I recall, in those days it was nothing to see 300 to 400 people attend the convention—and yes, it was a real convention rather than a meeting. I grew up getting to know such notable people as Past Presidents Blondy Rucker, Herbert Gorubec, Leo Bales, Robert Stubblefield, Don Hoffman, and Ben Norman, all of whom hailed from the Central Texas District. Henry Perry probably remembers this: Blondy Rucker at one time owned a skating rink in Killeen and he was a very good skater. He would often, after the pumper races, put on his skates and skate about the dance floor with a bottle of whiskey in one hand and a cigar in the other, just having a ball.

After graduating from high school in 1972, my intention was to pursue a career in law enforcement. I attended college, eventually earning a degree in criminal justice. However, my uncle hired me as a firefighter in 1973. A year later in 1974 the city needed a fire marshal, so I was volunteered. My uncle was gone by then and we had a new fire chief, Raymond Ashcraft, who knew I was studying criminal justice at the time and just felt like I would be a good fit, so he volunteered me.



Front row from L to R: Rusty Kattner, Paul Hamilton, Henry Perry, Harvie Cheshire, Mike Richardson, Bill Gardner, Kelby Jasinski  
Back row from L to R: Ben Kennedy, F. Jim White, Chris Barron, Rayford Gibson, Joe Ondrasek

## President's FORUM

*continued*

I was just 20 at the time and had no idea of what being a fire marshal meant. The fire department had no inspection program, no pre-fire plans and no public education. So while learning everything I could by the seat of my pants, I began setting up those programs. I spent most of my summers attending municipal fire school to learn my job as a fire marshal, or going to the police academy and attending an arson investigator class in Galveston for two weeks. While in Galveston I became friends with the Galveston fire marshal, A.D. Carroll, and was hired as assistant fire marshal in Galveston in April 1977.

My first day on the job was eventful. That was a day I will never forget. I was on that day and we had a general alarm fire downtown. When I was called to respond, I looked out my hotel window on Seawall Boulevard toward downtown and the entire night sky was lit up. When I finally made it downtown, a three-story hotel and a large furniture store were on fire—a half a block. The fire resulted in seven people being burned to death and many people unaccounted for. Nine months later, the grain elevator blew up, killing 22 people. Needless to say, my first year was quite eventful.

In 1988 I was promoted to fire marshal and served in that position until my retirement in 2000. As fire marshal, Galveston was a recipient of a grant from the U.S. Fire Administration to develop a fire safety program for senior citizens. With the help of the University of Texas Medical Branch and the Shriner Burn Institute we produced a video in English and Spanish, PSAs, and distributed over 1,000 smoke detectors. We used community organizations such as the Noon Optimist Club and Meals on Wheels to present the programs while the fire department installed the smoke detectors. Our PSAs were shown courtesy of Houston TV stations. All this hard work paid off though—prior to receiving the grant, Galveston's fire death rate averaged about three senior citizens annually. After the program was implemented and smoke detectors installed, we had no fire deaths for almost seven years and that number has remained low ever since.

In 2000 I retired and went to work part time for the Village Fire Department conducting inspections, primarily residential sprinkler systems. The Village

Fire Department is co-op between six small villages. In 1999 and 2000 all six villages amended their fire and building codes to require residential fire sprinklers in all new homes and any commercial building larger than 1,000 square feet. We have nearly 20 percent of our homes protected by residential fire sprinklers. Our residential fire sprinkler program is responsible, in part, for the fire department and all of the villages receiving an ISO rating of Class 1. In 2003 I was hired full time as an inspector, and in 2010 promoted to fire marshal.

All my life I have been active in numerous fire service organizations. I am a charter member of the Texas Fire Marshal's Association (TFMA). I was one of those who saw the need for such an organization and in 1977 we were chartered. Since that time we have grown to over 300 members and sponsor the annual Texas



Fire Marshal's Conference in Austin. I currently serve as a director of the TFMA and was a recipient of their Life Member Award in 2008. I have been active in the Galveston County Fire Fighters Association since 1979. I served as president in 1983, and secretary and/or treasurer since 1988. (I am currently serving as a commissioner and treasurer for the county association.)

Several years ago the Houston-area fire marshals saw the need for an organization among fire marshals to network and share information. As a result, the Greater Houston Area Fire Marshal's Council (GHFMC) was formed. We provide a means to network and share information, and provide regular training sessions in fire investigation and fire prevention. I am a past director and currently serve as their treasurer. In 1988 I served as president of the Gulf Coast District. I have also been an instructor at the municipal fire schools for 29 years.

Enough about me. As president of the SFFMA, I want to ensure that the association serves you—that as a member, you receive as much benefit from the SFFMA as possible. That said, I have instructed our executive director to be more open to the membership. I believe that we should have no secrets and shouldn't withhold information from you. Of course there will be some information that, as a matter of good business practice, we cannot divulge—such as legal proceedings—but as much as possible, I want the Executive Board, the executive director and staff to be responsive to your questions. So ask them, or express your concerns to us.

I have also instructed the executive director to send our membership liaison, Diana Cardona, out to visit with our districts. Since being elected to the board and traveling around to our districts, I have noticed a significant reduction in attendance at our districts. We have had symposiums to try to correct this current trend, but still we have not seen any improvement. So, Diana will be visiting your districts to assist them with electronic media to enable them to communicate with their membership. She will have conferences with your district boards to let you know what the responsibilities are and the timelines required.

The Executive Board this past year pushed our districts to get their reports in before the conference and make their committee appointments. Over recent years, some districts have failed to submit reports and the president has had to call district secretaries to get committee appointments. We had some success this year with district reports and committee appointments but still some districts were lagging behind. So in addition to Diana visiting our districts, I have instructed the executive director to provide templates on the SFFMA website that will assist the districts with their reports and committee appointments. The president of the association has to make his or her appointments in July after the June conference. It was a task made easier this year by those districts who cooperated, but a dreaded task nonetheless. I know from previous presidents, those committee appointments were time-consuming because some of the districts did not send in their committee appointments in a timely manner. I am hoping the website template will aid our districts in meeting their obligations to the SFFMA, thereby making committee appointments a more enjoyable task for those presidents who will follow me.

I have instructed the executive director to develop a district manual that will give guidance to the district boards on their responsibilities, report guidelines, and how to communicate with their membership. It will include guidelines for the selection process of the firefighter and EMS person of the year, pumper team rules, poster contest rules, and all those things that evolve around the district.

I have asked the Executive Board to reach out to their counterparts on district boards to solicit the needs of the district and to provide a contact person that a district board member can call upon anytime there is an issue. If you are a district board member, you should be contacted by your Executive Board member counterpart. If you have not been contacted, please call them. Their contact information is in the magazine and on the SFFMA website. Communications between our district boards and the Executive Board is imperative for a successful venture.

Speaking of the EMS provider of the year—do you know that this award may go away sooner than later? Since the award was instituted there have not been enough nominees each year to make it worthwhile. There is talk that if the committee doesn't see an increase in nominees, the program will be canceled. Please, the Executive Board asks that each district submit a name. Give the program a chance to recognize those who are deserving of such a prestigious award.

The association is doing quite well under the leadership of our Executive Director Chris Barron. I don't think you will find a more qualified person to oversee our association business. All the Austin staff work hard to assist the volunteer fire service of Texas. When you compare our program to that of other states, we are second to none. In fact, it has been told that our certification program is the best in the country.

As you know, as of January 1, 2015, we will begin mandatory testing for Firefighter I and Firefighter II certifications. A couple of years ago, the board decided that it was in all our best interests that testing for all our disciplines be mandatory. So we instructed to the Certification Board that we wanted to see testing by 2015. I am proud to say we are there, at least for FFI and FFII. We also solicited the assistance of TEEEX for testing. The Certification Board and Executive Board felt it was important that third-party testing be a part of the program. Third-party testing adds a certain level of credibility to the program and TEEEX seemed to be the perfect fit for us. So, thanks to TEEEX and Chief Moore, we will have testing beginning in January. The details of how

this system will work will be coming out in the near future, if not in this magazine. The changes to the FFI and FFII certification program did not make everyone happy. Certain individuals complained when some subjects were removed and they felt it was taking away from our certification. The program we have meets the minimum standard of NFPA 1001. I want to emphasize *minimum*. If a district, county or department wants to add certain components to the program to meet their needs without taking away from the minimum standard, by all means, that is acceptable and encouraged. The testing process is new, so be patient with the Austin staff and TEEEX as we work our way through this. I am certain there will be hiccups, but enough thought and study have been put into the testing process that those hiccups will be minor and easily overcome.

This coming legislative year will be a busy one for the SFFMA. We have numerous pieces of legislation that we will be looking to file. The first is a residential fire sprinkler bill. In 2009 the Legislature took away from municipalities the ability to enact residential fire sprinkler ordinances (it's called home rule). We are of the belief that a municipal government is the best to gauge whether or not residential sprinklers are needed, and not the state. Each community is unique in its own right. Furthermore, each community knows best what level of fire protection it needs, not the state. So the SFFMA is joined by numerous fire service associations and trade associations and will be proposing legislation to reverse what was done in 2009. I want to emphasize that the legislation will not be about residential fire sprinklers but about home rule—the ability of a municipality to enact ordinances.

We will again try to get passed legislation that enables certified volunteer fire marshals to inspect businesses. Currently a volunteer fire marshal cannot inspect for code enforcement reasons if he or she does not hold a TCFP certification. An SFFMA inspector certification currently does not enable a fire marshal to conduct code enforcement inspections and we think that he or she should be able to. Another piece of legislation we will again propose is the Volunteer Firefighter Protection Act. The act will prohibit business owners from disciplining a volunteer firefighter who leaves his job in response to a fire incident. We came really close last legislative year to getting this done, but unfortunately when the bill got to the governor's desk it was vetoed. Those are just three pieces of legislation we will be working on and I

am certain there will be others as we move forward this legislative year. Please keep in mind that when you are called by a member of the T-Flag or the Austin staff to call on your state legislator to support these bills or any other bill the SFFMA supports, please do so. This is a call to action, and believe me, your legislator listens to his constituents when they call. Chances are you voted for him or her and may have even participated in their campaign. So when called upon, please make those phone calls.

Before I forget and get into some serious trouble, I need to mention that I am married to Nita, and while at the Galveston convention we will celebrate 40 years of marriage. We have one daughter, Kristal, and two grandchildren: Garrett, age nine, and Renee, age four. As grandparents go, there is nothing those two kids want that we won't get for them, even if their mother objects. Many of you know Nita served as president of the TFA in 2008 and two terms as president of the Gulf Coast Ladies Auxiliary.



Finally, our convention will be here before you know it. Your attendance is urgently requested. You know that our membership is 20,000+ strong but only about 250 delegates make the decisions that impact all of them. I know we won't get all 20,000 to attend, but if we could get just five percent of the membership to attend (that's 1,000 members) each and every convention, those decisions we make will be more representative of our membership. I ask that you make the commitment to attend our convention—even if it's your first time or if you have missed a few or just stopped coming—we want to see you in Galveston in 2015, McAllen in 2016, and San Marcos in 2017. We have top-quality training and networking. You will always come away with something new.

Thanks so much for reading my article. I hope to see you in Galveston.

**Rusty Kattner**  
President, SFFMA

## LOSING THE CLIPBOARD: TRUCK CHECKS IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

By David Cain

Most fire districts across the country still log their apparatus and equipment checks on clipboards or paper logsheets. But that's starting to change, as many departments are beginning to convert from these pen-and-paper systems into digital logbooks. Automating inspections saves departments both time and money since crews can perform their checks with greater efficiency, ensuring that nothing slips through the cracks.

While the start-up costs of implementing such systems is higher than paper-based programs, the savings in the long run are substantial. "A conservative estimate is that a targeted document management effort can return as much as \$20-\$40 for every dollar invested," according to a report from [totallypaperless.com](http://totallypaperless.com). These savings are the result of increased productivity, immediate access to decision-critical data, and the ability to keep, organize and retrieve vast amounts of information (think regulatory guidelines, manufacturer specs, and compliance documents). But the highest ROI for departments that have taken their checks paperless comes from identifying and repairing apparatus issues early on, before the repairs become more costly and dangerous. According to Daniel Cimini, fire chief for Surfside Beach (S.C.) Fire Department and former member of the NFPA 1901 Technical Committee, "There are several things that firefighters can do on a regular basis to head off issues early on, and



Engineer Carrie Porter performs her daily inspections with Southwest Adams County Fire Rescue in Denver, Colo. (Image courtesy of PStrax.com)

that will help to prevent the need for costly repairs. When everyone knows what needs to be done and what has already been done, the fire department saves time and money. Problems get caught up front and major breakdowns are reduced drastically or eliminated altogether."

Although fire agencies do not necessarily need a software program to help them catch issues early on (Chief Cimini has been repairing apparatus long before there were digital systems out there), the demand is increasing as departments are asked to do more with less. Firefighters are trained in more areas today, and departments have much more specialized equipment to track, maintain and document. Digital logbooks help departments organize and manage this multitude of information more efficiently than paper checksheets.

With the improved efficiency and transparency that comes with digital logbooks, it is only a matter of time before they take the place of paper checks. Consider what has happened with incident reporting. Before NFIRS, all incident logs were done on paper. But the move to computerized records has drastically increased efficiency by centralizing information, improving accessibility, and cutting down on redundancies. Digital logbooks aim to do the same thing for apparatus and equipment checks.

*David Cain was deputy chief with the Boulder (Colo.) Fire Department for 34 years. Since his retirement in 2013, he has worked as a consultant for PStrax, a cloud-based service that digitizes fire department apparatus and equipment checks. You can reach Chief Cain at [david@pstrax.com](mailto:david@pstrax.com) or 303-972-9444.*

## IN MEMORIAM

### Cloverleaf VFD

**Chief Michael Battise** September 3, 2014

### TEEX Guest Instructors

#### Pete Martinez

Aransas Pass VFD June 6, 2014

#### Bennie Spaulding

Killeen FD June 7, 2014

### Texas A&M Forest Service

**Jerry Williams** July 26, 2014

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - General

### Is the State Firemen's & Fire Marshals' Association part of state government in any way?

No. We have "State" in our name but that refers to the fact that the state office is the physical headquarters of the association and its districts. This is also where all membership, certification and historical records are kept. SFFMA is a private, nonprofit trade association by definition.

### How many employees work at SFFMA?

Currently we have seven full-time employees: our executive director, certification administrator, certification assistant, membership coordinator, event planner, sales manager, and an administrative assistant. We also have both a contracted facilities manager and an accountant. Together we serve approximately 20,400 individual members and 1,420 fire departments and other organizations.

### Does SFFMA maintain records on volunteer firefighter pensions?

No. That information is maintained by the Texas Emergency Services Retirement System (TESRS), formerly known as the Firefighters' Pension Commission. [Website: www.tesrs.org](http://www.tesrs.org), [Phone: \(512\) 936-3372](tel:5129363372).

### Where can I find a copy of our fire department charter?

That information is filed with the secretary of state, corporations section. [Website: www.sos.state.tx.us/corp/forms\\_option.shtml](http://www.sos.state.tx.us/corp/forms_option.shtml), [Phone: \(512\) 463-5555](tel:5124635555).

### Is SFFMA closed every Friday?

No. Our office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

### I heard the SFFMA office has moved. Is it still located near Austin?

Yes. We are located about 13 miles south of the capitol in an unincorporated area of Travis County.

### Does SFFMA get involved in politics?

Yes, but the association has no official party affiliation. We have a lobbyist and a political action committee that work closely with the Executive Board at the legislative level to help support and protect the interests of our volunteer emergency responders.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - Certification

### How does the TCFP firefighter program match up to the SFFMA firefighter program?

Because both programs are based on the same training, the TCFP views the following certifications with the same weight as a TCFP academy: current Module 4, Firefighter II (Advanced), full Firefighter II, or Advanced Firefighter/Accredited Advanced Firefighter issued prior to 2012. Provide a copy of one of these to TCFP to document eligibility to challenge their Basic Firefighter exam(s). A department's certification coordinator should credit anyone holding a TCFP academy completion certificate with the required objectives for the current SFFMA program Modules 1-4, and can file an application up through and including all four modules. Anyone already certified to Module 4, who provides a copy of their TCFP exam verification letter or TCFP Basic Firefighter certificate will be upgraded to full SFFMA Firefighter II, at no extra charge.

### My department had a fire/flood/catastrophe and all of our training records are gone. Do we have to start over?

No. In situations where training records are missing, an instructor certified by SFFMA or TCFP can test individuals on the material. As long as the individuals are able to demonstrate knowledge of the material, the coordinator may give them credit for the specific objectives. The exam will take the place of the missing documentation in the individual's records.

### How long do we need to keep training records on file?

The Certification Board recommends retaining training records for a minimum of three years. If the department has access to a scanner, consider saving them in PDF to a CD or other portable medium to cut down on physical storage space.

### My application was sent in a long time ago and I've not gotten a certificate. What's the holdup?

Please check with your department's coordinator. All applications are currently reviewed within three weeks of arrival and are either immediately issued

or the coordinator is notified of any irregularities.

Main causes for delay are: Progress Reports (annual training summaries) not submitted or closed, coordinator has not met the workshop attendance requirement, appropriate fees have not yet been paid, applicant's membership dues have not yet been paid, clear/appropriate documentation not submitted with the application, and missing/incorrect signatures. Once the last of the issues is corrected, we will issue the outstanding certificates, even if it takes a couple of years.

### I recently attended training outside of the department, but I do not see that reflected in my individual training record in SFFMA Online, why not?

The certification coordinator at your department is the sole individual responsible for entering your training into the SFFMA Online system. SFFMA certification staff has no way of knowing who has attended what training and where, or what material was covered in the training unless that information is provided to us directly, and furthermore, we do not have the authority to sign off on the accuracy of records made and kept within your department. It is up to the individual and the coordinator to be sure that accurate training information is entered when training is completed.

### I received my membership card but it does not show my certifications, why not?

Unless you have applied for certification through SFFMA, you will not have any certification codes on your membership card—even if you are TCFP, IFSAC or ProBoard-certified. Our membership cards only reflect certifications held through the SFFMA Certification Program at the time that the card was printed. If you have applied for SFFMA certifications and they do not show on your card, please check with your coordinator to see if they are aware of any issues holding up your certification(s), or call the SFFMA certification staff. If you require a new card, replacements are available for \$5.

### How much will my application cost?

Currently, application processing fees range from \$5 to \$30, but on January 1, 2015, the fees will standardize to \$25 each.

## 2015 UPDATE

### Is the Certification Board going to stop making changes to the program anytime soon?

No. At the Executive Board's direction, the Certification Board has tied the SFFMA program to NFPA standards. Those NFPA standards go under periodic review about every four years, so you can plan on continual review and update of all of the certifications offered.

### When can we expect another update?

January 1, 2015, should be the last major restructuring of the firefighter program. The next update to NFPA 1001 should be effective 2018, with SFFMA and TCFP making their program adjustments effective 2019. All of the other certifications are based on separate NFPA standards that are on their own four to five-year review cycles.

### I've heard the changes are to mirror the TCFP program. Is that true?

No. SFFMA and TCFP both base their certification programs on a national standard (NFPA), and by doing so help to legitimize both programs nationally. A benefit of basing the programs on NFPA is that certifications based on the same standard from other states easily transition into and out of Texas. IFSAC and ProBoard exams are also based on the NFPA curriculum materials.

### What is the overall change to the firefighter program for next year?

There is an overall decrease in the amount of material required to earn a firefighter certification through SFFMA starting on January 1, 2015. Six categories of training are being fully removed from the firefighter curriculum with three of those moving from the firefighter to the driver/operator curriculum. There are some objectives added to the program, but the overall total will be significantly lower.

The term "Module" has been widely confused with the TEEX "Phase" classes, so the board is scrapping that term. Instead there will be three levels to NFPA 1001 training: Introductory, full Firefighter I and full Firefighter II. Introductory is the minimum amount of Firefighter I training recommended under NFPA 1403: Standard on Live Fire Training Evolutions.

*Membership Q&A can be found on our website at [www.sffma.org](http://www.sffma.org) under About Us.*

## New Nonprofit Invites SFFMA Members to Create Statewide Fire Policy

**Austin**—A new nonprofit will bring a unique form of policymaking to Texas this fall—one that could permanently improve fire prevention for Texans. Glasshouse Policy, which was founded in February by Francisco Enriquez and Thomas Visco, has built an online forum where they plan to host a public effort to “crowdsource” state policy.

“After the tragedy in West, Texas, some legislators, firemen and newspapers pointed to Texas’s fire codes, saying that the codes are to blame for the destruction of property and loss of life,” Enriquez said. “Other Texans say that our fire codes work, and they worry that augmenting the current system of fire codes could hurt the economy.”

“Whichever side you come down on,” Visco added, “fire prevention policy is fertile ground for a collaborative dialogue.” Crowdsourcing is the process of bringing to-

**“...fire prevention policy is fertile ground for a collaborative dialogue.”**



Francisco Enriquez and Thomas Visco in the gallery at the Texas House of Representatives

gether a diverse collection of otherwise disconnected individuals to accomplish a goal. Similar to the way in which Wikipedia constructs their comprehensive, user-written and user-edited encyclopedia, Glasshouse Policy will craft legislation based on input from a huge swath of Texans.

Grace Renbarger, a board member of Glasshouse Policy and a lecturer at the University of Texas, hopes that the forum will include more Texans in a policymaking conversation this fall. “Not every firefighter or fire marshal in Texas can appear at a committee

hearing in Austin to discuss their concerns,” she said. “Now, with Glasshouse Policy’s one of a kind “Texansourced” policy forum, every Texan will have the opportunity to submit legislative ideas and share unique points of view with legislative decision makers.” Glasshouse Policy’s online, crowd-

sourced process starts in September. In October, Glasshouse Policy will host the first of several stakeholder roundtables. At these roundtables, Glasshouse Policy users’ opinions will be presented to experts, advocates, academics, and legislators.

“We hope our platform provides new ideas for the capitol community,” Enriquez said. “Our ultimate goal is to get stuff done in Austin,” he continued, “and we’ll need Texans to help us accomplish that goal.”

**To find more information on Glasshouse Policy or to participate in their online discussion, go to [www.glasshousepolicy.org](http://www.glasshousepolicy.org).**



### Rule Review for TESRS

By Michelle Jordan

It’s been a productive first year and we’re proud of what we’ve been able to accomplish with our partners in the fire service. We value our relationships with SFFMA, member departments, active members, retirees, and other stakeholders. We’re all on the same team. Collaboration produces better results. Working together makes us stronger.

With those principals in mind, we will be beginning a review of all of our program rules, in order to clarify and improve their efficiency. It is our hope that our member departments will contribute their ideas, because we know that they know how this stuff really works in practice.

We will begin this process in October 2014 with the goal being to provide the board of trustees proposed changes at the board meeting in Galveston, to be held during the SFFMA conference on June 16, 2015. The meeting will be held at the Moody Gardens Hotel, in order to make it possible for departments to attend the meeting and address the board if desired.

The schedule for our rule review is as follows:

- October 15, 2014**  
Rules Committee to begin rule review process
- December 15-16, 2014**  
Rules Committee to meet in Austin to discuss rules under consideration for change
- February 6, 2015**  
Deadline for emailing rule change suggestions to the agency
- February 26-27, 2015**  
Rules Committee to meet in Austin to finalize rule change suggestions
- March 2015**  
TESRS staff to format proposed rule changes
- April - June 2015**  
Legal review of proposed rule changes
- June 16, 2015**  
Rules Committee presentation of proposed changes to the board of trustees in Galveston, with a public hearing format for departmental input
- June 2015**  
Proposed Rules posted in the Texas Register for comment
- August 2015**  
Board consideration for adoption of the proposed rules

If you’d like to send suggestions for rule changes, you can email them to us at [rulereview@tesrs.texas.gov](mailto:rulereview@tesrs.texas.gov). Rule changes require a legal review and we need to allow enough time for that process. For this reason, suggestions must be forwarded to us no later than February 6, 2015.

We’re grateful to all of our stakeholders for their support as we work to make TESRS the best it can be. Follow our progress: online at [www.tesrs.texas.gov](http://www.tesrs.texas.gov), [txfirefighterpension](#) on Facebook, and [ForTexasHeroes](#) on Twitter. We hope you’ll feel free to contact us anytime with your comments and suggestions at (512) 844-TXHEROES or [michelle.jordan@tesrs.texas.gov](mailto:michelle.jordan@tesrs.texas.gov).



**The Texas Emergency Services Retirement System (TESRS)** is an agency of the state of Texas that administers a pension

system for 223 volunteer fire and emergency services departments in communities statewide. In addition to providing a pension benefit, departmental membership in the TESRS system means volunteers are covered by death and disability benefits.

**SOCIAL MEDIA ... SO WHAT?**

Statements, information and tips within this article taken from the HubSpot eBook, "How to Use Facebook for Business: An Introductory Guide" and 2014 Social Marketing Industry Report by Social Media Examiner.com

By now you have heard of social media, and maybe you've experimented with it. Not only is it an excellent way to keep in touch with friends and family, but it has become increasingly important for businesses and organizations to find customer and donor support.

Think about how you find information about products and services. Are you watching commercials on TV? Maybe you're sifting through those mailers that fill up your mailbox or looking online. There are a lot of options when it comes to consuming information, but people have gotten better and better at ignoring marketing messages.

Enter Facebook. Facebook is a social media tool used for networking. It allows users to connect and share information in many different ways. The access to all age demographics and the ability to hone in on niche markets have made Facebook the top social media site in the world.

Users have an opportunity to use Facebook to engage with others directly, and this allows you to promote content like webinars, articles and other resources that further similar interests or causes.

Facebook is a great tool for fire departments because it provides an easy way to connect with your community. Websites are over! They continue to have a purpose, but they're not where the action is happening. People want real-time activity and relevant news, especially if you're trying to inform them about a cause or a campaign for recruitment or even an upcoming event.

**THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:**

1. Do not create a personal profile for your business. Profiles are for individuals and pages are for businesses.
2. Pages allow you to designate multiple administrators, so that you can have several people managing the account.

This ensures that if someone leaves your department, you can still have control over the account.

3. Pages are public and help you get listed in more relevant search results.

4. Profiles have friends, which require user-acceptance, but anyone can become a fan of your page without going through an approval process.

**GET STARTED**

1. Create an engaging page. Use applications like Facebook's Discussion Boards and YouTube's Video Box to add more interesting and engaging content to your page. Give users a reason to become a fan of your page and interact with you.

4. Make your page publicly searchable. Make sure that your page settings are set to be public. This will allow your page to show up in searches and drive more likes.

**GROUPS vs. PAGES**

The key distinction between groups and pages is that a group is for a community of people with a common interest, while a page represents a brand or entity of which there are fans. Depending on how you want to manage your audience, you can use either. However, it's important to be transparent and authentic when using social media for your organization. People like to connect with people, and what's more people-oriented than the fire service?

**LITTLE-KNOWN FACTS**

- 73% of men and women born between 1946-1964 use Facebook over other social media sites

- 13% of men and women born between 1946-1964 use Twitter

- 13% of men and women born between 1946-1964 use LinkedIn

Think about what audience you want to reach. This can



2. Use the News Feed. The added benefit of creating an engaging page is that every time a fan engages with your page, that activity is published to their News Feed.

3. Use your existing network. Spread the word to the people you already know and ask them to become fans of your page on Facebook. This will lead to more likes, and build your audience.

help you make a decision about where your social media activity will be more successful.

*If you have any questions on how to get set up with any of these social media tools, please email [membership@sffma.org](mailto:membership@sffma.org) and we'll provide you some useful information to help you get started!*





# State Firemen's & Fire Marshals' Association of Texas

Promote, Unify, Represent, and Educate The Fire Service of Texas

Click here for members-only experience.\*\*

Sign In

Create

- ABOUT US
- JOIN
- DIVISIONS
- CERTIFICATION
- COMMUNICATIONS
- FIREFIGHTER MEMORIAL EXPANSION
- VFD INSURANCE
- BUILDING PAVERS



## NAVIGATING THE NEW SFFMA WEBSITE

### ABOUT US

**NEWS**—currently also displayed on the homepage, under building image  
**EXECUTIVE BOARD** and **STAFF** listing and contact information  
**FAQ**—membership **CONTACT US**

### JOIN

Under **JOIN** you can find everything related to membership. **MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION, BENEFITS, FORMS, TYPES, ETC.**

### DIVISIONS

**DISTRICTS**—new information available (maps, district contacts, updates on events)  
**EMS INDUSTRIAL INTERNATIONAL TFA** (scholarship information)  
**CERTIFICATION** Includes direct access to **SFFMA ONLINE, CERTIFICATION NEWS, LISTINGS, BOARD MEMBER CONTACT INFORMATION, LICENSE PLATE APPLICATION INFORMATION** and **FAQ.**

### COMMUNICATIONS

**ADVERTISING INFORMATION**—rates, deadlines, artwork specifics  
**MEMBER CONNECTIONS PUBLICATIONS**—e-InfoFire, InfoFire, Texas Firemen  
**PHOTO GALLERY**  
**\*\*COMMITTEE ROSTERS**—must sign in to view rosters  
**SHOP** Includes anything you can purchase or order through SFFMA (**TRAINING LIBRARIES, SFFMA MERCHANDISE, R&R**)

**MATERIALS, FIREFIGHTER MEMORIAL EXPANSION DONATIONS, VFD INSURANCE, BUILDING PAVERS).**

### EVENTS

**GENERAL INFORMATION CONFERENCE INFO**—previous year contest winners and following year details  
**EVENTS LIST CONTEST RULES**—Photo Contest, Pumper Races, FFOY/EMS of the Year, Driving Contest



**CAR RENTAL**



**Association Member Benefits Advisors (AMBA)**

Now it's easy to rent and save with exclusive member rates! Choose from a large selection of cars, vans and SUVs, available at any of our convenient airport or neighborhood locations. Think "member benefits" when you reserve a rental car for business or pleasure! Discounts up to 25%!

**Avis discount code:** AWD# 6725000  
Call: 800.331.1212  
www.avis.com

**Budget discount code:** BCD X925500  
Call: 800.527.0700  
www.budget.com

**Hertz discount code:** CDP #1860896  
Call: 800.654.2210

**TRAVEL**



**AMBA Travel Perx**

AMBA Travel Perx brings the best values in vacations to association members. Special offers are available on fantastic cruises, resorts and escorted tour vacations to the Caribbean, Mexico, Panama Canal, Europe, Alaska, South America, and Asia.



**Cheap-O-Air**

Save \$10 - \$25 off your airfare. SFFMA members must request a promocode prior to purchase. Promotions vary throughout the year.



**Government Employee Travel Opportunities**

This is a unique space-available vacation, condominium, hotel, and resort program exclusively for current and retired government employees and now open to our association members! Space-available condos are located worldwide and available for \$349.



**Six Flags Fiesta Texas (San Antonio)**

SFFMA members never have to pay retail again for admission to Six Flags Fiesta Texas. SFFMA general admission is \$35.99. That's 50% off the regular price! Tickets must be purchased ONLINE. Ask us to email you the special link.



**La Quinta Inn & Suites**

SFFMA members can get up to 25% off their nightly rate by providing a unique promocode when presenting their SFFMA ID card at check-in. Offer varies based on location, participation and availability. Check www.lq.com for more information.



Wyndam Hotel Group Code: 8000000406  
Includes: Wyndam Garden, Wingate, Hawthorn Suites, Ramada, Days Inn, Super 8, Baymont Inn & Suites, Microtel Inns & Suites, Howard Johnson, Travel Lodge, Knights Inn



Cheap-O-Stay  
Save \$10 - \$25 on your stay with a choice of many hotels all over the world. Promotions vary throughout the year. Request a promocode via email.

**SUPPLEMENTAL PLANS\*\***



**Association Member Benefits Advisors (AMBA)**

SFFMA Dental & Vision Program  
First Diagnosis Cancer Plan  
Medicare Supplement  
Life Insurance  
Annuity  
Identity Protection  
Medical Air Services Association  
Phone: 800.258.7041



**Aflac (Supplemental)**

Reduce the out-of-pocket expenses caused by hospitalization or accidents. Aflac pays cash benefits directly to you!  
Contact: David Espinosa  
Phone: 512.535.5683  
www.espinosaagency.com



**Armed Forces Benefit Association (AFBA)**

AFBA honors the mission set forth by its founders—to promote the welfare of its

members and their families. They offer a free \$5,000 AD&D and LODD policy to SFFMA members' families. Schedule your meeting.

Contact: Jimmy Sewell  
Phone: 210.379.0456  
Email: jsewell@afbatx.org



**Air Evac Lifeteam**

AirMedCare Network providers can provide financial peace of mind for you and your family while extending this vital service to the community.

Contact: Randy Teague  
Phone: 325.501.6278  
Email: teaguerandy@air-evac.com  
www.airmedcarenetwork.com



**Ameridoc**

Call a doctor while on the road or traveling; no denials or application, immediate coverage nationwide. Ask about life/disability benefits.  
Phone: 877.870.4447 Ext.8



**VFIS of Texas**

SFFMA's longstanding partner and benefit provider. Any fire department insurance need can be fulfilled with VFIS's extensive coverage packages that include accident and sickness insurance, liability, property, etc.  
Phone: 800-252-9435  
Fax: 512-448-9929  
Email: vfisoftexas@vfistx.com

**DINING**



**myAMBA Dining**

Enjoy dining out? Exploring local eateries? AMBA and restaurant.com have teamed up to offer members exclusive dining discount cards for use on restaurant.com. Buy your discounted gift certificate and save big on your next restaurant visit!  
Buy a \$5 gift card and get \$25 dining credit.  
Buy a \$10 gift card and get \$50 dining credit.  
Buy a \$20 gift card and get \$100 dining credit. www.myambadining.com

**COMPUTERS**



**Apple Discount**

Members qualify for preferred pricing on some of the latest Apple products and acces-

\*\* SFFMA has negotiated a discounted rate on all the supplemental plans. (AMBA, Aflac, AFBA, AirEvac, AmeriDoc, VFIS of Texas). These plans are NOT included in your SFFMA membership.

sories. Apple member purchase program benefits include special member discounts on Apple products, quarterly promotions, free standard shipping on orders over \$50, free engraving on iPod, online custom product configuration, and simplified checkout using any combination of credit card, Apple Gift Card and Apple Instant Loan. Phone: 1.877.377.6362  
<http://store.apple.com/us/go/eppstore/amba>  
 When calling, use discount code "AMBA"  
 \*Discounts not available on all items.  
 Check with Apple by phone or online to verify discounted items.



### Dell Computer

Dell now offers members special pricing under their Employee Purchase program  
 Phone: 866.257.4711  
[www.dell.com/epp](http://www.dell.com/epp)  
 Dell ID number-PS95750248

## DISCOUNTS ON SERVICES



### Assets-In-Order

This online service is 256-bit encrypted, equal to security levels used by banks. Includes 1 GB of storage of any important information your family might need in case of your passing. SFFMA members get a free 1-year Legacy Lockbox Heritage Membership! Phone: 888.840.1213



### BAKFlip Tonneau Covers

The BAKflip Tonneau Cover/Truck Bed Cover is the newest generation of hard, folding, multi-panel tonneau covers! Enjoy all the security of a locking hard tonneau cover and have instant access to your entire truck bed! SFFMA members receive \$75 off their purchase. Limited to one per customer. Request a promocode by emailing: [membership@sffma.org](mailto:membership@sffma.org).



### California Casualty

Find the best value in auto insurance with California Casualty. Call now for a free, no-obligation rate quote! Special firefighter program available! Contact: Brandon Watson  
 Phone: 866.477.7423  
 Email: [bwatson@calcas.com](mailto:bwatson@calcas.com)



### LegalShield

Low-priced legal advice and protection! LegalShield gives you the power to talk to an attorney about any personal legal issue.

Whether it's big, small or somewhere in between, your LegalShield-provider law firm will be there to offer advice or assistance on a variety of issues. They offer advice, consultation and representation. Membership even includes attorney fees in trial defense services (see plan for details). This is a monthly membership, \$18.95/month for SFFMA members (and it covers your whole family).

Contact: Diana Cardona  
 Phone: 512.454.3473 Ext.106  
 Website: [www.legalshield.com/info/sffmatx](http://www.legalshield.com/info/sffmatx)



### Monitronics

Get professionally monitored home security for \$10 a month, with a 36-month contract discount on monthly service.  
 Phone 800.615.4225



### Dignity Memorial

SFFMA Bereavement Program offers savings on funeral/cremation products and services. Discount based on the arrangements made through a Dignity Memorial service provider in your area.



### MedeStat

This is a free service that aims to reduce the cost of health care by providing important information vital to the patient's health via specialized QR-code system. If you know you have a special medical condition, take medication, or have food allergies, this free QR program could save your life! It can even store your emergency contact information. SFFMA members are encouraged to use the free basic service to create their own MedeStat label. Medestat also has upgraded products that can be updated remotely.



### Premier Nationwide Lending

Home Sweet Texas/Homes for Texas Heroes Program:

Premier Nationwide Lending is one of the leading mortgage companies in America. Eligible borrowers are full-time: teachers, teacher's aides, librarians, nurses, counselors, nurses/nursing program faculty, allied health program faculty, firefighters, corrections officers/juvenile corrections officers, county jailers, public security officers, peace officers, medical service personnel. Get more information about eligibility!

Contact: Jorge Aldrete  
 Phone: 512.699.5267  
 Email: [jaldrete@pnlending.com](mailto:jaldrete@pnlending.com)  
[www.teamaldrere.com](http://www.teamaldrere.com)



### Stream Energy/PowerUp! Program

Lower your energy costs by switching your provider to Stream Energy and you may receive discounts on your monthly bill! Check if Stream Energy is an energy provider in your area. Enroll in the PowerUp! Program and see how you can save big. If you are already a Stream Energy customer, please contact our representative and let him know.

Contact: Ajax Daugherty  
 Phone 214.766.7056  
 Email: [ajax@ajaxpower.com](mailto:ajax@ajaxpower.com)

## CELLULAR PHONE SERVICES



### at&t

SFFMA members receive 8% off monthly payments when providing a unique promocode: 2400560.



### Sprint

SFFMA members receive 23% off select plans. Primary account holder must be SFFMA member. Everything Unlimited plan is not eligible for this discount.  
 Promocode:



### Solavei

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>



### T-Mobile

Switch to T-Mobile and your family's early termination fees will be covered when you trade in your devices—up to \$650 per line. So you can experience fast, 4G LTE network with no annual service contract and no over-age charges.  
 Phone: 1.866.464.8662  
 Promocode: 25454TMOFAV

## MEMBER BENEFITS CONTINUED TRAINING MATERIALS



### SFFMA

SFFMA store offers training materials and SFFMA merchandise. SFFMA members take advantage of the best discount prices available

from a variety of publishers.  
Contact: Julie Beauchamp  
Phone: 512.454.3473 Ext 105  
Email: Sales@sffma.org



### NCEMSC

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



### National Volunteer Fire Council

Become a member of NVFC to take advantage of increased AD&D and LODD benefits, member access to NVFC

website and resources, and discounts. Join NVFC for \$15 a year, includes a \$10,000 AD&D and \$20,000 LODD benefit.



Accredited training for EMS continuing education. Track and record hands-on training. There is no software necessary. Receive up to a \$30 discount on Prevention Link professional online training!  
Contact: Jason Finley  
Phone: 858-376-1619

## FINANCIAL



### Randolph-Brooks Federal Credit Union

When you compare RBFCU to other local financial institutions, it's easy to see the value that comes with membership in our credit union. RBFCU households save an average of \$432 per year compared to bank customers, and about \$130 annually compared to those other credit unions. Forty-five branch locations throughout south central Texas. New locations in Collin County.



### Texas Fire Facilities Fund

TFFF is dedicated to providing the most cost-effective financing and expertise to fund your fire station and equipment.  
Phone: 800.883.1199, www.govcap.com (mention SFFMA membership)

## FELLOW TEXAS RESPONDERS

By Dan Key, co-chairman of the T\*Flag Committee

President Kattner has appointed Past President Bill Gardner and me as co-chairmen of T\*FLAG for this year. Together, Bill and I will be able to track the election and the subsequent legislative session more effectively since Bill is located closer to the center of the action in Austin.

Election 2014 is in full swing now, and once the races are settled and the swearing-in, inauguration speeches and inaugural festivities are over, all eyes will be on the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session.

During the SFFMA conference in Lubbock back in June, we sat and talked about how the 84<sup>th</sup> session might shape up. There will be more changes in leadership than have been seen in a long time at the capitol. There will be a new governor, a new Lt. governor (senate president pro tem), a new AG, and many new senators and representatives in the house. The speaker of the house is one of the few who will remain in place. What this could mean is that the Legislature could get off to a slow start while the new leaders get all the committee assignments made and get settled into their new positions. We don't know yet what the new leaders are going to designate as priorities in the budget process or in considering bills to be brought up.

We will keep a close watch for the early trends of the new leadership at the capitol with the help of Executive Director Barron, our lobbyist Trey Blocker and others.

T\*FLAG is working with President Kattner to identify the legislative priorities for SFFMA. We have a preliminary list of legislative priorities which includes the following;

- Inspector bill (broaden language to inspectors meeting/exceeding NFPA 1031)
- Home Rule bill, Chapter 1301 of plumbing code related to sprinklers
- Restoration of TFS 2604 funding to the full \$30 million

- Double TFS TIFMAS funding to \$2 million
- Volunteer firefighter job protection bill (50 employees minimum)

The election will come first in early November, and T\*FLAG as well as TESPAC are in the process of evaluating which candidates to endorse. We are vetting the candidates to see who will support the issues of firefighters and first responders. We are capable of bringing a very large group of voters to the polls on election day, given the SFFMA membership of over 22,000 along with their families and friends. The candidates know very well what a huge influence we could have on a race for statewide office. Please keep an eye on the races as early voting starts in a week or so and political issues related to the fire service could always pop up in the campaigns.

The SFFMA website and social media links will be a good source of information for you to refer to. The first responders of Texas can influence budget priorities and legislation if we stay engaged and speak with an informed voice. Please join the effort and get engaged in the election and the run-up to the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session.

As always, if you have questions or need help with fire service issues related to legislation, please contact me or Past President Gardner.

Sincerely,

*Dan Key*

Co-Chairman, T\*Flag Committee

### Dan Key

Cell: 281.923.7670  
Email: dannykey@yahoo.com

### Bill Gardner

Phone: 512.845.9689  
Email: bgardner@sffma.org



Thank you to TEEX and Texas A&M Forest Service for hosting the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Legislative Day at their headquarters in College Station. Many thanks to each and every one of you who took the time out of your busy schedules to participate in this event. SFFMA appreciates your time and dedication to the fire service of Texas.

At about the same time that the SFFMA team was completing plans for the Legislative Day trip, Executive Director Chris Barron was also meeting with representatives from Electric Transmission Texas (ETT) regarding contributions. Barron extended an invitation to ETT representatives to accompany the group to the firefighter school. Larry Jones, AEP Texas Corporate Communications manager and a spokesperson for ETT, was able to join the trip and photograph the group touring the site.

*"The facility is absolutely incredible," Jones said. "We learned about what occurred during recent wildfires in Texas and were able to see the types of training that volunteer firefighters go through here in Texas. My respect and appreciation for how seriously the volunteers take this training was already high; but those feelings increased by orders of magnitude as a result of the tour."*

*"Touring Disaster City reminded me of trips to Universal City," Jones continued. "The difference is the participants are training for life and death situations—not make-believe ones."*

# SAVE THE DATE

**First Responder and Legislator Appreciation Day  
& Memorial Service**

**MARCH 25, 2015  
11 A.M.**



Memorial service will be followed by a fish-fry luncheon. More information to follow.

## 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 & Convention. Please keep these companies in mind when purchasing new apparatus, equipment and services.

### A

**Advanced Rescue Systems**  
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3459 FM 36 S  
Caddo Mills, TX 75135-6773  
Phone: 903.527.3841  
Email: advancedrescue@hotmail.com

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HAYS, BILLY  
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Phone: 979.451.3855  
Email: salesami@vvm.com

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Email: rzrudy@akronbrass.com

**American Signal Corporation**  
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8600 W Bradley Rd  
Milwaukee, WI 53224-2816  
Phone: 800.243.2911  
Email: rrieselbach@americansignal.com

**Applied Force Technologies**  
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2409 Colleen Dr  
Pearland, TX 77581-5403  
Phone: 832.289.2135  
Email: bob@appliedforcetech.com

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Phone: 866.680.5143  
Email: bwatson@calcas.com

**Casco Industries**  
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Phone: 800.551.8787  
Email: raymond@cascoindustries.com

**CCMAX**  
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11211 Katy Fwy  
Houston, TX 77079  
Phone: 832.436.7028  
Email: safety@ccmax.us

**CE Solutions**  
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Marble Falls, TX 78654-3076  
Phone: 512.715.9333  
Email: support@ems-ce.com

**Chief Fire & Safety Co. Inc.**  
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927 S 4th St  
Chickasha, OK 73018-4655  
Phone: 405.224.2596  
Email: rpayne@chieffire-safety.com

**Consolidated Traffic Controls, Inc.**  
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Arlington, TX 76001-7140  
Phone: 817.265.3421  
Email: president@ctc-traffic.com

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Email: cronnietyaylor@yahoo.com

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Fort Worth, TX 76179  
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Email: jesper105@live.dk

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Baytown, TX 77523-8448  
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Email: steve\_barnett@bullard.com

**Edward Jones**  
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Buda, TX 78610-3437  
Phone: 512.312.2332  
Email: shirley.malone@edwardjones.com

**EFJohnson Technologies**  
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Irving, TX 75038-2401  
Phone: 800.328.3911  
Email: bdixon@efji.com

**Elkhart Brass Mfg. Co., Inc.**  
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1302 W Beardsley Ave  
Elkhart, IN 46514-1891  
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Email: rbenn@elkhartbrass.com

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Phone: 480.205.6524  
Email: broberts@ermaps.com

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Temple, TX 76501-7652  
Phone: 254.774.5905  
Email: jrjrice@extracobanks.com

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**Fire in Texas**  
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 Consulting LLC**  
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**The Danielle Dawn Smalley Foundation**  
 MARTIN, SHEILA  
 999 W US Highway 175  
 Crandall, TX 75114-2003  
 Phone: 972.472.6500  
 Email: sheilamartin@smalleyfnd.org

**The Gary Tilton Firefighter Training Fund**  
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 PO Box 241  
 Katy, TX 77492-0241  
 Phone: 281.391.2787

**TML Intergovernmental Risk Pool**  
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 Email: julia@trainingdivision.com

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 Tyler, TX 75711-9020  
 Phone: 903.510.3205  
 Email: jeas@tjc.edu

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 Email: brianv@vickersconsultingservices.com

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 Email: smalley@wc.edu

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 Email: info@westexfire.com

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 Email: cdavis@wildwell.com

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 Email: patty@wildfiretruck.com

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 McDade, TX 78650-5020  
 Phone: 409.745.3232  
 Email: rick.isaacks@tycofp.com

**Wilson Fire Rescue Apparatus**  
 WILSON, KIRBY  
 218 Deborah Dr Ste 2  
 New Braunfels, TX 78130-3053  
 Phone: 830.625.2343  
 Email: kirbyjr@wilsonfirerescue.com

## BLAKE LOCKNANE 2012 SFFMA Mascot



Many of you know that Blake Locknane (2012 SFFMA mascot) had an accident in June while assisting with pumper race truck

transportation to the convention in Lubbock. SFFMA is happy to report an update from his parents:

Blake was able to start school on time in August. At the last doctor's appointment, he was very impressed with how fast Blake was recovering and was doing in general. He told him that he could start putting 100% weight on his left leg and he could do away with his crutches. He continues to go to physical therapy three times a week, and that should be concluded in three weeks. Since he is no longer having to use crutches, he has now been able to obtain his driver's license. We are now finally seeing the light at the end of the tunnel from this tragic accident.

We can't thank our SFFMA fire family enough for everything each and every one of you has done to make this tragic accident and recovery easier for our family.



## CONGRATULATIONS!



*Pictured from left to right: Ben Kennedy, James Carr, David Wade, and Barbara Marzean*

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**2014 Firefighter of the Year**  
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**2014 EMS Responder of the Year**  
**JAMES CARR**  
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# Capitol **MONUMENT** Expansion Project

**THANK YOU TO EVERYONE LISTED ON THIS PAGE FOR HELPING US REACH OUR GOAL OF \$150,000 IN 150 DAYS!**

**WE DID IT!!**

Unfortunately an updated bid from the State Preservation Board came in and we have to raise additional funds to complete the entire expansion of the monument at the capitol grounds.

**IF YOU WAITED TO SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTION, NOW IS THE PERFECT TIME TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. ALL DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE.**

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# THE CALL TO SERVE ANSWERED, TIME AND TIME AGAIN

By Jessica Jackson, Texas A&M Forest Service communications specialist



For nearly 100 years Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS) has answered the call to help conserve, protect and lead. Throughout Texas the agency is known as a steward of this land ... but there is another side to the agency. A side that is seen in the event of an emergency. Oftentimes this extends beyond the state's boundaries. When the call is put out for our men and women to serve alongside other agencies, we answer that call—every time.

## Deploying to the Front Lines

A service agency with a bias for action is how TFS is often described by current director, Tom Boggus. When it comes to eagerness and dedication to help those in need, this is one statement that rings true for TFS crews.

When other states or agencies need to request assistance, the order goes through the Texas Interagency Coordination Center (TICC). TFS looks at the needs from the request and determines how best to fill the request. TICC checks the list of available qualified personnel, notifying them of the deployment opportunity. Interested personnel then must seek approval from their chain of command. Once this is done, TICC fills the request and starts to make arrangements for travel.

Because TFS is part of a nationwide system that gives qualified individuals a chance to be a part of diverse teams to help mitigate incidents, this offers a prime opportunity for personnel to get experience in different areas.

For that reason TFS firefighter Jonathan Keller volunteered to go on recent deployments.

"I'm usually a 'dozer operator and I've never had the opportunity to be on a hand crew," Keller said. "I wanted to be involved and help others while learning a new skill."

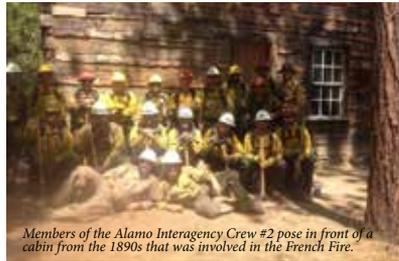
Knowledge and experience, together with the determination to complete every mission successfully, makes TFS a vital part of interagency operations.

## Recent Deployments

Since this July, TFS has responded to 18 out-of-state incidents. These deployments often involve supporting efforts to either suppress wildfires or help manage an incident.

## The French and Beaver Fires

On July 30 a request for additional resources came through TICC for the French Fire in the Sierra National Forest outside of Oakhurst, California. Eight TFS personnel stepped up to assist other agencies. The nearly 14,000-acre fire was already 70 percent contained when assistance was requested, but crews were still needed to help mop up the area and check for hazards.



Members of the Alamo Interagency Crew #2 pose in front of a cabin from the 1890s that was involved in the French Fire.

According to Bryan Collins, task force coordinator and crew boss, due to the fire being in a remote location with no road access, additional resources were needed. "[The French Fire] was a very well-coordinated event," Staff Forester and firefighter Jason Furmaniak said. Working with such agencies as U.S. Fish and Wildlife and USDA Forest Service, it allowed each team to bring unique perspectives and experiences to help most efficiently suppress the fire."

Beyond the crew's dedication to help, it also showed perseverance, resiliency and professionalism. Almost immediately after being released from the French Fire, the crew rode 12 hours to make it to the Beaver Fire in the Klamath National Forest outside of Klamath River, California.

"On this assignment, we ran night operations," Keller said. "While it was exciting to be near the fireline to help put out spot fires and do back-burns, it was also much more hazardous than the French Fire."

The back-to-back fires did little to slow down the crew's drive to be successful.

"Upon our release, both fires were in really good condition," Collins said. "The French Fire was 95 percent contained and Beaver was approximately 75 percent contained."

Crew members agreed that the most memorable parts of their assignment were working with other agencies, helping to protect the beautiful countryside, and realizing how well they worked together for a common goal.



Alamo 2 crews assist with helicopter loads of hose off the French Fire.

## The King Fire

On Sept. 16 a TFS crew was deployed to help suppress the King Fire near Pollock Pines, California. As the fire intensified, TFS assistance was requested, and we responded by sending six personnel to help manage the incident.

"I wanted to learn how large-scale incidents were ran out west," stated Nicole Lang, fire coordinator. "This was my first and I learned what needed to be done within a fire squad and how to look out for the people around me."

Having TFS personnel on these fires greatly increases their experience and knowledge to continue to improve upon how incidents are managed in the future. "Working closely with other agencies, you can learn a lot about their protocols which, in turn, helps us when we run into similar instances in our own area," Lang said.

Upon their release, the 97,000-acre fire was nearly 85 percent contained.

## Pecos Flood

Heavy rains associated with Hurricane Odile caused extensive flooding throughout West Texas. With floodwaters rising as a result of debris collecting and causing the water to back up, a request for additional resources was put out on Sunday, Sept. 21. TFS deployed eight personnel to support the Pecos River Flood, making up an incident management team.

According to Jeff Meiner, assistant chief fire regional coordinator, the IMT helped organize and track resources related to the incident, and assisted emergency managers in planning, coordinating and developing the incident action plan on a daily basis.

"The incident went very smoothly," Meiner said. "We helped bring calmness and reassurance to the public."

These deployments not only allow TFS to bring in its expertise, but also offer valuable training experience.

"Most of us just went through a training of a new program called I-Suite. This deployment allowed us to fine-tune our skills and better track resources," Steven Carter, regional fire coordinator said. "We were able to save time developing the IAP,



The Pecos River above the Red Bluff Reservoir. Wet areas show how much higher the water had been in the hours prior. It is still flowing a lot of water and has washed out this oil field road. The black poly line you see on the left across the road and on the right in the river bed is an oil field line that used to stretch across the river and as you can see it was separated from the force of the water. Road damage is visible at the current water's edge on both the left and right sides.

Continued on page 30

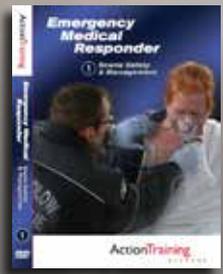
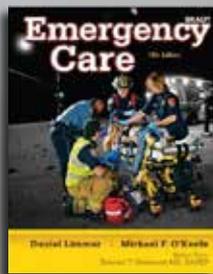
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# TEXAS FIRE FACILITIES PROGRAM FORUM

## TEXAS FIRE FACILITIES PROGRAM CELEBRATES EIGHT YEAR ANNIVERSARY

In 2006, the SFFMA created the Texas Fire Facilities Program (the "Program") 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 Program, 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 IRS tax code section specifically designed to reduce the cost of borrowing to VFD's. Even today, most traditional financing sources don't offer the flexibility and customized financing solutions many in the industry need. The SFFMA's Program 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 Program makes a donation to the SFFMA Fire Programs Institute/J. C. Swadley, Jr. Fund for each qualified transaction.

### FIRE STATION FINANCING KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The lending market continues to offer the lowest interest rates available in years. Over the past year, many SFFMA members have refinanced their debt obligations saving thousands of dollars in interest cost. If you own a facility previously financed as a commercial transaction with an interest rate greater than 4%, you may want to consider the possibility of refinancing your loans at today's historically low TAX-EXEMPT interest rates. Additionally there are other benefits of working with an experienced and knowledgeable finance specialist including:

- Avoiding costly interim constructions loans
- Avoiding the need for personal guarantees
- Creative flexible terms to meet your budget needs

Considering the complexities of the current lending environment, it is vitally important you partner with a lending source experienced and knowledgeable of the unique financial requirements and TAX-EXEMPT borrowing authorities applicable to the Texas fire service community. Just as an architect can save your department from making costly construction mistakes, experienced financial representatives can recommend financing structures to meet your department's needs and budget.

The SFFMA Fire Facilities Program is endorsed 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 Program, today's interest rate environment may be just the reason to do so. Although interest rates are at historically low levels as mentioned previously, many economists are predicting meaningful interest rate increases as soon as the first quarter of 2015.

*Contributed by the Texas Fire Facilities Program Team*



# Texas

Fire Facilities Program



# Texas

Fire Facilities Program

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# PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS



## BEST IN SHOW

Thomas McDonald  
Friendswood VFD

Two a.m. garage fire in Friendswood; garage is detached with one vehicle inside

## FIRE-RELATED ACTS



1<sup>st</sup> Place - Thomas McDonald  
Friendswood VFD



2<sup>nd</sup> Place - Kevin O'Connor  
Center VFD



3<sup>rd</sup> Place - Thomas McDonald  
Friendswood VFD

## LIFESAVING ACTS



1<sup>st</sup> Place - Lauralee Veitch  
Community VFD



2<sup>nd</sup> Place - Thomas McDonald  
Friendswood VFD



3<sup>rd</sup> Place - Thomas McDonald  
Friendswood VFD

## EDUCATION AND PUBLIC SAFETY



1<sup>st</sup> Place - Marie Williams  
Brazos County Pct. #4 VFD



2<sup>nd</sup> Place - Thomas McDonald  
Friendswood VFD



3<sup>rd</sup> Place - Kristine Schaffner  
Alvin FD

# CONFERENCE PHOTOS



## SPECIAL THANK YOU TO:

- Lubbock Fire Department
- Visit Lubbock
- Panhandle District
- Tim Smith
- Jim Hanson — Photography
- TEEX Staff — Training and AV equipment
- SFFMA Executive Board & Staff
- Sergeant-at-Arms
- All Committee Members & Attendees

More conference photos can be found on our website at [www.sffma.org](http://www.sffma.org).

## SUCCESSFUL WORKSHOP ON “UNIFIED COMMAND APPROACH IN CASE OF INDUSTRIAL EMERGENCIES”

The training course Unified Command for Industrial Emergencies was organized in the auditorium at the Cultural Centre in Comodoro Rivadavia, Argentina. The training was delivered by renowned international consultant and professional firefighter Ian Moscoso.

More than 190 people attended the event, representing different educational institutions, public agencies, businesses, and various uniformed groups such as firefighters, frontier police (“gendarmeria”), the armed forces, the coast guard, and civil defense personnel. The activity was declared of municipal interest and was jointly organized by Pan American Energy (PAE) and the municipality of Comodoro Rivadavia through the office of the province secretary and within the framework of the relations with the community initiative being carried out by PAE in the region.

After taking part in the workshop, Sofia Fiel, one of the candidates of the Rada Tilly Volunteer Fire Department, remarked,

“I’m very satisfied with the training and with the clarity with which the trainer explained the concepts. The experience shared with Ian has allowed us to learn and understand concepts we were not fully aware of. And the interaction with the trainer and the exchange of ideas with the group about the different topics has also been extremely valuable.”

Gastón Malbos, manager of institutional relations at PAE, talked about the high turnout and pointed out that, “We are very pleased with the results obtained and the number of participants. The initiative put forth by PAE and the municipality of Comodoro Rivadavia is a clear example of the positive results that can be obtained when public and private institutions coordinate their efforts.”



During the workshop, Moscoso talked about different aspects related to setting up a unity of command approach and to identifying the necessary tools for coordination in case of an industrial emergency. The course was devised to train participants to operate efficiently and effectively for incident or event management within the Incident Command System (ICS). It also focused on how to manage and administer both human and technical resources. Using audiovisual aids, case studies of actual emergencies and events were discussed, and different scenarios were analyzed, such as industrial fires, mass casualty incidents, unlawful attacks, sabotage and major spills.

Through these initiatives, PAE reinforces its commitment to the communities where it operates by offering proposals that encourage learning and development.

*Ian Moscoso is a federal trainer in Incident Command Systems (FEMA/NIMS), consultant to the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), and also the chairman of the International Committee of the State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas. Source - <https://www.pan-energy.com>*



# 2015

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**THE CALL TO SERVE ANSWERED, TIME AND TIME AGAIN** CONTINUED from page 22

it made managing the incident much more efficient.” Interagency operations give TFS personnel the opportunity build professional relationships and meet new comrades whose paths they will surely cross again.

TFS worked alongside the Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas Department of Emergency Management, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Texas Army National Guard Aviation, Texas Task Force 1, National Weather Service, Texas Department of Transportation, and Union Pacific, among many others.

“These kinds of incidents allow TFS to build critical relationships with local, state and federal agencies, reaffirming we can work together and be successful,” Steve Pollock, chief regional fire coordinator said. “It’s an honor to work with a great group of professionals who are dedicated to doing a job, even under the worst conditions.”

**Striving to serve**

No matter how small or insignificant a job may seem, it is often those that are the most critical. This is one of the many lessons learned from recent deployments. Everyone has a job and everyone plays a vital part in completing the mission. With interagency operations we are truly stronger together than we are alone. ♣



*Aerial view of the bridge on Business 20, east of Pecos  
Debris blocked up the river and diverted the waters toward the city of Pecos.  
A debris dam can be seen south of the bridge.*



Smokey Bear celebrated his 70th birthday this year all across Texas. His career began in 1944 as a cartoon character. In 1950, a real bear cub was rescued on a fire in New Mexico, nursed back to health, flown to live out his life in the National Zoo in Washington DC as one of the most recognizable bear in history.

TEXAS A&M FOREST SERVICE

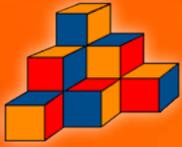
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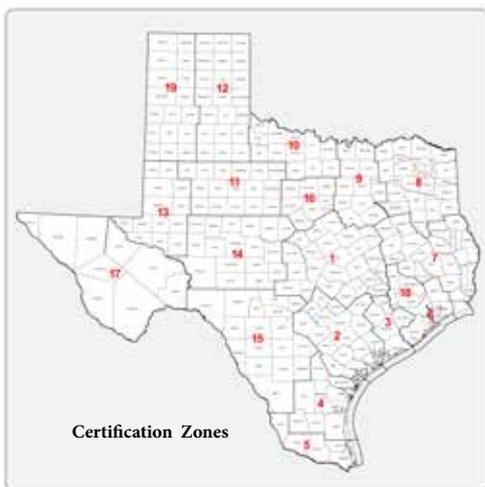
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for the latest and most updated committee rosters visit [www.sffma.org](http://www.sffma.org)

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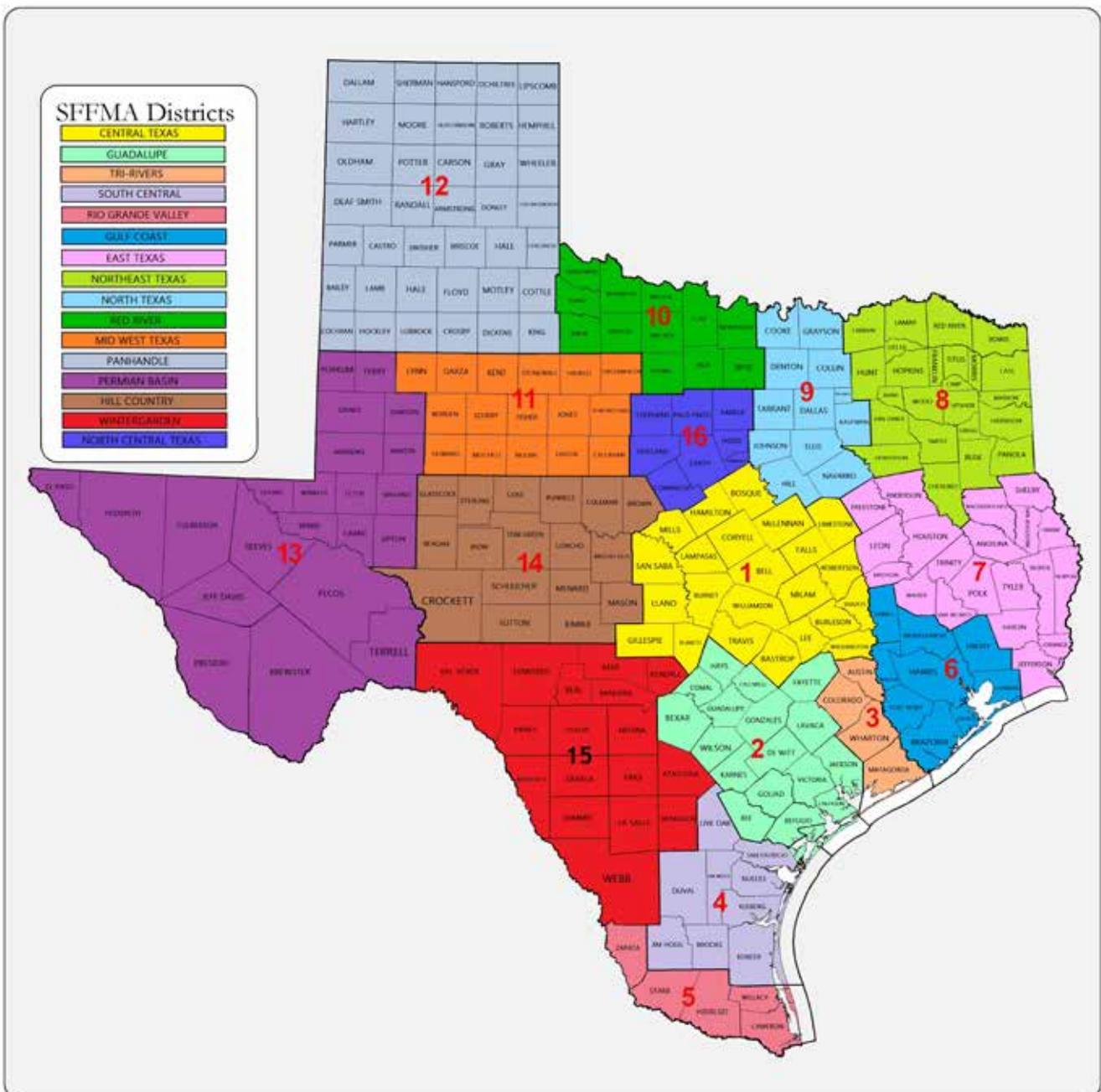
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Talk to someone you love. Talk to a friend or colleague.

Or, talk to counselors trained and experienced in  
the firefighter and EMT culture by calling the national

Fire/EMS Helpline: **1-888-731-FIRE (3473)**.

**Find resources to Share the Load at [www.nvfc.org/help](http://www.nvfc.org/help).**

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## Be at Your B.E.S.T. With New Resources for Health and Safety

With a diverse geography, a population of over 26 million people, and a vast array of potential types of emergencies, Texas presents unique challenges to the men and women who protect its communities. It is critical that firefighters and EMS personnel in Texas have the tools and resources they need to effectively and safely do their jobs. The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) has many resources that can help.

The NVFC created the Volunteer Firefighter Health and Safety Priorities to provide departments and personnel with a series of B.E.S.T. practices they should follow to bring health and safety to the forefront and make sure everyone goes home. These B.E.S.T. practices are divided into four categories: Behavior, Equipment, Standards and Codes, and Training. View the B.E.S.T. practices at [www.nvfc.org/health\\_safety](http://www.nvfc.org/health_safety).

Many new resources and tools are now available to help departments implement the B.E.S.T. practices and address critical health and safety needs. Find all of the following resources and many others on the NVFC website at [www.nvfc.org](http://www.nvfc.org).

Also remember that Texas firefighters can join the NVFC for the special low rate of \$15 through the State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas. That is half-off the regular individual member rate and you still receive all of the great benefits of NVFC membership.

### SHARE THE LOAD

Due to the nature of the job, firefighters and EMTs are at increased risk for behavioral health concerns such as depression, PTSD, anxiety, and addiction. The NVFC launched the Share the Load™ program to provide emotional support to firefighters, EMTs and their families. Through this behavioral health campaign, the NVFC is working to break the stigma around behavioral health issues, open up the dialogue in departments, and provide resources departments and emergency personnel can use to prevent tragedies such as suicide.

A main component of the program is the Fire/EMS Helpline, a free 24/7 helpline at 1-888-731-FIRE (3473) that first responders

and their families can call anytime for assistance with a variety of behavioral health issues. Other resources include a newsletter with articles containing tips and tools for addressing behavioral health issues in the fire service, outreach and awareness materials departments can use to let members know help is available, suicide prevention guides and training, and an online resource center providing additional avenues for assistance.

### FAMILY GUIDE

Family support is critical to the wellbeing of first responders and too often family relationships become strained or disintegrate under the pressures of the volunteer fire service life. The NVFC has developed a resource to help families face the unique challenges that come with having a volunteer first responder in the family. What to Expect: A Guide for Family Members of Volunteer Firefighters is designed to help spouses, children, parents, siblings, and significant others navigate the volunteer fire service life, keep family relationships strong, and become a part of the fire department family.

### EMERGENCY VEHICLE SAFE OPERATIONS

The NVFC has released the second edition of Emergency Vehicle Safe Operations for Volunteer and Small Combination Emergency Service Organizations. With vehicle accidents a leading cause of firefighter fatalities each year, this educational program helps departments develop and implement vehicle safety policies and procedures to prevent line-of-duty deaths and injuries.

### PPE VIDEOS

The NVFC is releasing a series of videos this fall focusing on proper use and maintenance of PPE. Topics will cover overhaul, cleaning, replacement, standards, finding funding, and new technologies.

### STANDARDS GUIDE

The NVFC partnered with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) to create a guide to help departments

understand and successfully implement key NFPA safety standards. The guide provides clarification, identifies manageable steps, and highlights available resources to assist departments in reaching their safety goals.

Two editions of the guide are now available; one covering 1500: Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program, 1720: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations Emergency Medical Operations and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments, and 1851: Standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting, and the other covering 1407: Standard for Fire Service Rapid Intervention Crews and 1021: Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications.

### CODES GUIDE

The NVFC partnered with the International Code Council to create a guide to help departments understand and utilize key components of the International Fire Code (IFC). The guide reviews the code-setting process and highlights important topics from the IFC—including fire hydrant location, proper water main size, proper access for fire apparatus and fire lanes, commercial building pre-incident planning, and vacant buildings. It also contains practical checklists to help fire departments take action to ensure safety in the build environment.

### VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

The NVFC's online learning center features low-cost courses on a variety of topics, designed and delivered by fire service members and industry leaders. The courses are on-demand and self-paced, and include downloadable course materials and certificates of completion. Topics range from health and safety to leadership to recruitment and retention, and more.

### WILDLAND FIRE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM TRAINING

In partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, the NVFC has launched a four-module course and companion toolkit and resources as part of the Wildland Fire Assessment Program. The program teaches volunteer firefighters and nonoperational support teams how to conduct assessments for homes located in the wildland-urban interface so they can help make their communities more fire-adapted.

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### REQUEST YOUR ARSON HOTLINE POSTERS NOW!

The Insurance Council of Texas is trying to get every fire marshal in Texas to utilize the Arson Hotline posters which, placed at the scene of suspicious fires, ask for those who know anything about the fire to call the toll-free Texas Arson Hotline. The hotline is maintained 24/7 and pertinent information from the calls is passed on to the State Fire Marshal's Office, which then forwards the information to the investigating officer.

All callers remain anonymous and calls that lead to an arrest or indictment can be rewarded up to \$1,000. The rewards come from A Texas Advisory Council on Arson (ATAC) which the Insurance Council of Texas helps manage.

The Arson Hotline poster is in English, and when flipped over, is in Spanish. Through the help of the SFMO, we will forward to fire investigators who request them: Arson Hotline posters, arson business cards (English and Spanish) and bumper stickers promoting the phone number, 1-877-4 FIRE 45. The Texas Arson Hotline has resulted in several arrests and thousands of dollars in reward money have been handed out.



The Texas Emergency Services Retirement System (TESRS) recently announced a program to assist volunteer and combination departments in obtaining used surplus furniture and office equipment at no cost. The program is open to participation by both members and non-members of the

TESRS. For more information, contact TESRS at 844-TXHEROES or shirley.hays@tesrs.texas.gov.

# e-INFO FIRE NEWSLETTER

State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas

HAS YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS CHANGED AND YOU NO  
LONGER RECEIVE OUR EMAILS?

EMAIL [NEWSLETTER@SFFMA.ORG](mailto:NEWSLETTER@SFFMA.ORG)



Greetings to all:

I am honored and pleased to assume the duties of president of the Texas Firemen's Auxiliary. I want to thank the SFFMA, the TFA Board and the committees for the hard work you have done this past year.

I especially want to thank my family for their love and support over the previous four years I have served on this board.

As I have discussed many times, I plan to focus on growing TFA by recruiting new members; improving communication through social media; and supporting Texas firefighters by promoting the interest and welfare of the SFFMA.

These items will require change, and change is a crucial part of productivity and growth. In order for TFA to grow, we need to take into consideration that the face of the fire service is changing. More and more women are firefighters and therefore, not allowed to be members of our auxiliary. Auxiliaries are made up of both men and women whose purpose is to provide supplementary or additional help and support to a group. In order for TFA to be able to support ALL Texas firefighters, perhaps we should look at changing the face of our auxiliary. Perhaps we allow members of support services to become members of our auxiliary. These men and women are not firefighters, but want to lend support to their firefighters. Would allowing these support groups to be members of TFA require change? It most certainly would. My question is .... are you open and willing to change?

TFA has moved forward with our presence on social media. We now have a Facebook page (Texas Firemens Auxiliary), a Twitter account (follow us at tfaaux), and are currently working on our own website. With these mediums in place, our goal is to be able to attract more members and to be able to communicate more efficiently with our current members.

I would like all of our members to remember why TFA exists. We exist because of the SFFMA.

Without them, we are nothing. As an auxiliary, we are here to support, assist and supplement the SFFMA. I think too often we get caught up in the details and tend to forget this.

Plans are well underway for the 2015 SFFMA Conference and Convention to be held at beautiful Moody Gardens in Galveston. SFFMA President Kattner and I are working closely together to ensure this convention is fun and successful. The TFA luncheon is being planned as well and ALL women are invited to attend. Please watch for additional details as you won't want to miss this time of fellowship.

My motto and theme for this year is "Imagine the Possibilities." Imagine where we are able to take this auxiliary if we are open to change. Imagine what it would be like if we focus on why we exist. And imagine what a difference we can make by offering our support to ALL Texas firefighters!

Thank you again for the privilege to be able to serve a great organization. I look forward to seeing you all in sunny Galveston!

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TFA President

## PROPER USE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ATV/UTVs

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The commonality between emergency vehicles, all-terrain vehicles and utility vehicles (ATVs/UTVs) is that they are all vehicles. Providing a fast, fun-to-ride, low-cost, easy-to-deploy, and navigable option, ATVs/UTVs are becoming more noticeable in emergency service organizations (ESOs) across our state. Each ESO should place a high level of seriousness toward the driver's experience and training on this response vehicle. Additionally, the ESO should equally recognize that conversion of an ATV/UTV to an emergency vehicle encompasses a great deal of requirements. The ESO should consult the manufacturer before embarking on the conversion process of adding a tank or an EMS skid unit themselves.

Utilization of ATVs/UTVs in our service has been around approximately 30 years now. As ATV/UTV equipment has evolved, personal protection concerns among manufacturers has increased. Even with warning safety labels and safety advertisements, personnel are still rejecting these important messages and are treating ATVs/UTVs as recreational vehicles. Furthermore, ESOs are placing personnel in the driver's seat for emergency response while never considering the education process and/or maintenance needs before deployment. Emergency service organizations must perform an assessment to identify proper personal protective equipment (PPE) purchase needs and/or offer the appropriate safety equipment for the response. The state of Texas requires helmets worn to meet the United States Department of Transportation standards. Additionally, gloves and goggles must be worn while transferring these vehicles across public terrain (Texas law, Section 663.034).

Emergency service personnel are using these ATVs/UTVs like the bicycle theory: Once you ride one once, you're good to go for life. This theory does not help reduce liability for the ESO. The ESO cannot assume anything; personnel must be aware of dangers when driving, operating and/or riding in or on these vehicles. Many causes of accidents on ATVs/UTVs fall into two categories: 1) Operator behavior, and 2) Equipment failure. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (Sarah Garland, February 2013) reported that from January 1982 to December 2011, 11,688 ATV/UTV deaths transpired across the U.S., with 571 happening in Texas, which is one of the highest death tolls of any state. Sadly, these fatalities occurred across all age groups. Thirty-five percent of deaths occurred in those 16 years and younger, meaning that 65% of ATV/UTV fatalities featured victims over the age of 16. These numbers are shouting to the emergency organizations across the state, and we as ESOs should take preventive proactive measures to avoid becoming part of such tragic statistics.

We encourage the implementation of preventable measures be done early, before the deployment of an ATV/UTV. As a risk management process, the utilization and research for the types of duties the vehicle is to endure are a high priority when developing specifications for the purchase of ATVs/UTVs. ESOs tend to gravitate toward the purchase of utility vehicles because they offers off and on-road terrain diversity during operations at a low cost. In addition, these vehicles offer multiple passenger compartments allowing two to four people to ride in them. UTVs also feature beds capable of carrying skid units, a gas-powered water pump, an attack line(s), and a tank of water—usually 50-65 gallons of capacity (Figure 1) for fire suppression activities. Additionally, removing the fire skid units allows diversity for converting the vehicle into an EMS vehicle, allowing for patient transport and medical supply to be placed onboard (Figure 2). Our recommendation is to consult with a professional manufacturer of these vehicles, making sure that the load capacity is within the vehicle limits. Personnel and all safety equipment should be included when determining this capability.



Figure 1

When consulting with the manufacturer, the ESOs should be very specific about the equipment carried on the ATVs/UTVs. Some considerations are night and day operations, spotlight bars placed on top, flashlights and mounts, PPE, and extra fuel tanks for long-distance responses. If the ESO utilizes these vehicles as an emergency transport vehicle, all safety equipment should be onboard for the patient and family members. At a minimum, two personnel should respond with the vehicle at all times. Communication equipment should also be available as the vehicle travels to remote locations where signals may or may not be present. First aid and/or survival kits need to be onboard as well as suntan lotion, flame blankets, extra drinking water, fire extinguisher, responder medication and snacks based on the activity and terrain they will be traversing. Determining the appropriate type of PPE based on terrain operations is very important for the safety of personnel. For example, if your organization responds in a heavily wooded or weeded area, you may consider heavier leg and arm protection be worn. Additionally, a DOT-certified helmet with built-in face shield or eye protection, as well as sunglasses in bright areas, and gloves should be considered.



Figure 2

What about the terrain? Geo mapping is very important, giving the preplanning of the terrain a higher priority. The ESO will be traversing in areas that are not common. The development of preplans of recreational locations are crucial; where people hike, ride mountain bikes, horses and dirt bikes, or participate in other entertaining activities. When traveling off road, most recommend traveling on dirt and/or areas traveled by other vehicles, including rutted or worn terrain. If this cannot be accomplished, a partner should walk in front of the vehicle and determine whether the vehicle can proceed forward in the unknown area safely. Remember, we usually respond down roadways within our district. When we go off road in unknown terrain, we could accidentally travel in high water areas or fall from a shift of dirt or rock formation causing more injuries and even death.

Annual training is necessary, and identifying the risks associated with ATVs/UTVs is no different from other emergency vehicles within our fleet. Traversing over different types of terrain, the correct operations and maintenance procedures, personnel performance measures, and the proper use of PPE are very important subjects within the educational process. At a minimum, each person should attend four hours of classroom with another four hours of driving an obstacle course (off road preferred). The classroom portion should cover the latest accident trends, safety equipment, terrain identification and/or mapping, maintenance processes, operation, driver qualifications, and lastly, trailer operations, which are equally important. Skill practice should consist of a preventive maintenance checklist, a cone driving course, flat field and/or level ground area, on road surface, then an off road guided experience (Figure 3), with a post-maintenance check and cleaning being performed.



Figure 3

Lastly, all ATVs/UTVs are important members of our fleet. Personnel should be aware of the risks associated with the utilization of these vehicles and response areas they will be traversing. All safety equipment worn and standard operating procedures developed and enforced should be reviewed by all personnel. These vehicles are not for recreation. They are for performing an important task, and the ESO's implementation of best practices before the deployment of these vehicles is a proactive approach. Remember, the safe response begins before the response. ➔



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