



Volunteer Fire Officer Section Meeting
7/18/2015
Naples, FL

- Call to Order: 10:30 AM
- 1/24/2015 minutes approved: Tim Diamond approved; Mike Long second
- FSFC Update – Bill Wentlandt

FSFC is in the process of reviewing Fire Investigator Certification. The first public workshop will be in a couple weeks and the review will continue through the rest of the year. The Fire Safety Inspector program will begin review soon. FSFC is having a visioning session which will provide the public an opportunity to provide input on the roles the FSFC should play as well as share what areas they are doing well in and need to improve.

The State Fire Marshal and FSFC met with Richard Darby to discuss specific VFD issues. This was an informative and successful brainstorm. Some items that were discussed included the FSFC role with delivery of firefighter training, would modules be useful, online training options, better communication between the FSFC and VFD community, the potential for a dedicated point of contact position at FSFC for volunteers (statewide volunteer coordinator), and making available resources clearer.

They have received good response from departments for the Job task Analysis survey. If you receive one please respond as this information is very important and will be used in decisions moving forward.
- State Fire Marshal Office – Julius Halas

The volunteer coordinator position is a legislative budget request. They are moving forward with the request in the CFO Office. We are almost a year away for implementation of the position if it is approved. There is potential to use part time people to fill volunteer coordinator position in the meantime. The State Fire Marshal's office is working to make FF1 training more attainable. They are providing grant opportunities whenever possible. Senator Dean and Representative Shears were invited to the NW FL Volunteer FF weekend.

FL Fire Service lobbied for and received additional funds to use as scholarships to bring people to conferences/events. Richard Darby is the point of contact for these scholarship opportunities.
- Florida Forestry Service – John Fish

[Insert numbers from John][see attachment from Matt Weinell]

60% of fire caused by humans this year which is a 8% decrease. The prevention efforts are working. This is an El Nino year which typically means a quiet hurricane season. We are above average for rainfall across the state. 442 personnel sent to assist with fires out-of-state last year. Volunteer fire assistance grant funds are available. The 50/50 grant typically covers PPE, communications equipment, training and engines. There is still money available. 34 departments have taken advantage since January. Approximately \$282k has been awarded. Grants are approved at the beginning of each month.

Items are available at the warehouse in Lake City. Interested parties just need to set up an appointment. FFS will do a better job sharing this type of information with VFDs.

Scholarships are available for people to attend conferences/events. The NW FL Volunteer Firefighter Weekend. There will be scholarships geared toward firefighters (training) for Fire Rescue East.

Wildland PPE is available to firefighters who pass the course.

- Board of Directors – Richard Knoff

Incoming president Gary Bullard was introduced. Richard thanked the group and shared what a pleasure it was working with the section.

Scholarships are available to attend the Safety Conference and Fire Rescue East.

Regional training is still available. Assistance can be provided for advertising, training, funding, etc. but we need to know what type of training is needed. Anyone interested should contact Richard Darby to request training.

Julius suggested creating a document with information on everything going on within the VFD community such as a list of accomplishments and success stories (i.e. NFVFW 10 year anniversary, SAFER Grants, Forestry Grant Program).

- Fire Officer Program – Mike Long

The program is 80% finished. It's currently in the final stages of editing.

- NW FL Volunteer Firefighter Weekend – Richard Darby/Tim Diamond

The dates are September 16-20. This is the 10 year anniversary with lots of exciting things planned. There are 16 new classes this year and a post-banquet after party. This year transportation will be available for spouses to go to the beach and shopping.

There are scholarships available to attend many of the classes including SAFER scholarships for S130/S190, Retention & Recruitment Workshop, FF1 Sign-offs & Live Burn.

- SAFER Grant – Megan Arenberg

The Florida Fire Chiefs SAFER Grant ended successfully on 7/13/15. Over the 4 years we have received 2,250 new volunteer applications through our recruitment database and the number of trained volunteer firefighters within the state has risen 31%. Thank you to everyone for your assistance promoting the program. The FFCA applied for another SAFER grant in the 2014 application period. This new SAFER grant is a continuation of the first grant so it will continue the media recruitment (including local recruitment campaign funding) and Retention & Recruitment Workshops. It also includes funding for FF1 training, PPE, and Physicals. FEMA started announcing SAFER R&R grants on 7/17/15 so hopefully we will hear good news on this grant application soon.

- New Business

We are still looking into a rule allowing firefighters to be protected for being late to work due to a fire. This will protect them from losing their job due to being on a call. This may increase response times because many volunteers may not be responding because their jobs will not allow them to be late. VFOS will send out a questionnaire to gather more information. Stories about firefighters who lost their jobs because of volunteer commitments or didn't respond to a call because they knew they couldn't be late to work should be submitted to Richard Darby. These will be used to support this rule and will help to move forward with legislation.

The capitol memorial phase 1 is complete and looks great. The ribbon cutting ceremony was a great tribute. Phase 2 includes life size statues and is still in need of funding.

In March of 2016 the Forestry Conference (Wildland Weekend) will be held. It is in the planning stages now and Tim Diamond will provide further details soon.

Richard Darby attended the NVFC Board Meeting. He suggested everyone needs to join because it is an excellent organization with lots of great things going for the volunteer fire service.

- Meeting Adjourned: 11:35 AM

**Florida Forest Service (FFS) Report to the Volunteer Fire Officers Section, FFCA
FFCA Executive Development Conference – Naples, FL July 8, 2015**

2015 Spring Wildfire Season Recap: Chief John Fish gave an update on weather and statewide fire statistics.

2015 Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Grants can be found at the FFS website:

http://www.floridaforestservice.com/wildfire/vfd_grants.html . Grant applications are accepted each month for approval. The focus of the 50/50 grant program is PPE; Comm. Equipment; Engine or water handling accessories, and training. There is still money available. 34 fire departments completed the grant process since January 1st, spending over \$282,000. They have been reimbursed the 50% match, saving them \$141,000. On average that is an \$8,300 grant that gives back \$4,100. There are 42 approved active grants currently. Grants are approved the first week of each month, so get your application in today for August approval.

FEPP/FFP: Federal Excess trucks are moving through the tag system and will be available soon. For more details call John Kelley 386.243.6232, email: Johnny.Kelley@freshfromflorida.com .

NEW GRANTS/SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE:

New this year, Forestry is sponsoring scholarships for certain training events.

1. We have furnished 5 scholarships for this Conference. It pays lodging, registration fee, and meals not covered by the registration fee, at the state per diem rate of \$36/day.
2. We are also sponsoring scholarships at the N.W. Florida Volunteer F.F. Weekend in the panhandle this September 16-20. This is actually much more than a simple weekend; some of training covers 2-5 days. There are 10 scholarships available for \$130/190. There are also scholarships for Course Delivery, Hazardous Materials Operations, and some general classes. This amounts to about \$10,000 and could pay for upwards of 30 students. This is a significant commitment by Forestry, and we feel it is a very worthwhile investment in enhancing the capabilities of rural fire departments. Applications are available. For more information go to the NW FL Volunteer Firefighter Weekend website: www.nwflvolunteerffweekend.com . Or call 850.259.5137.
3. The Florida Forest Service also plans to offer scholarships to Fire Rescue East in Daytona in January 2016. The point of contact for these scholarships is going to be the FFCA VFOS Chair, Richard Darby.
4. So please spread the word about these great opportunities. And stay tuned for future training scholarships and wildland PPE offerings associated with the training.

For questions about any of these programs, please contact Matt Weinell, Fire Resource Manager, Florida Forest Service at 850.681.5931, email: Matt.Weinell@freshfromflorida.com