Brothers and Sisters,

I hope everyone had a safe and enjoyable summer and fall. Many of you got engaged in your local elections this year. In Indiana our ability to bargain is controlled by local elected officials. That is why we strongly encourage everyone to get involved. This February 1st and 2nd, the PFFUI will be holding our first Political Training Academy, a two day workshop that will lay out how we can successfully engage in local politics. There will be presentation on how and why to start a PAC, how to interview and endorse candidates, and how to engage them once they are elected. This program will be held in conjunction with the PFFUI’s Thomas H. Miller Legislative Conference on February 3rd. As with our past PEP programs, housing will be provided for those attending all three days. Each Local is allowed and encouraged to send two participants.

On September 1st we held our annual memorial. The keynote speaker was Raeanne Orebaugh, widow of Muncie firefighter Scott Davis. Raeanne spoke movingly to the families in attendance about how she and her children have dealt with the loss of Scott even as their lives have continued. She also spoke about her desire to lobby for firefighter safety, which hits home not only because of her loss but also because both of her sons aspire to follow in their father’s footsteps as career firefighters.

This year we added five firefighters, including two of our members: Steven A. Mitchell from Huntington Local 680 and Donald M. Hochstetler Wayne Township - Indianapolis Local 416. These two Brothers were the first firefighter deaths to be recognized as Line of Duty from cancer. Their families received the line of duty benefits from the State of Indiana. This is incredibly meaningful progress, but please understand that this recognition came only because of a great deal of work and documentation by their departments. To receive the death benefit the cancer must be duty related and have the exposure well documented. In other words, we must all start documenting any exposures that we have in order to protect our families if the worst should happen. John Buckman from the Fire Marshal’s office and Brother Patrick Fisher from Scott Township Local 4915 are in the process of developing an app for smart phones that will allow us to easily keep an accurate personal record of exposures. When they fully launch the app it will be free for anyone to use and we will have it posted on the website sometime this winter.

The 2016 PFFUI Convention will be in Indianapolis May 25-27 and the 2016 IAFF Convention will be in Las Vegas August 15-19. Please make sure that if your Local cannot send delegates to either convention that you assign your proxy votes. As always, there will be important issues voted on. Additionally, there will be elections taking place: IAFF General Secretary Treasurer Thomas Miller and 8th District Vice President Paul Hufnagel have both announced that they will be retiring after many years of dedicated service.

I am running for IAFF 8th District Vice President, but regardless of the outcome I will continue to work hard for you, my Brothers and Sisters.

Stay safe.

Thomas Hanify
Indiana State Executive Board

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2nd District Vice-President: Ron Meikle
3rd District Vice-President: Mark Mastison
4th District Vice-President: Bonnie Hensley
5th District Vice-President: Anthony Murray
6th District Vice-President: Robert Lovischek

Region Trustees:
1st Region Trustee: Eric Newell
2nd Region Trustee: Matt Cole
3rd Region Trustee: Larry Zuber
4th Region Trustee: Al Wood

Emeritus Officers
President Emeritus: Thomas H. Miller
Vice-President Emeritus: Chuck Sosbe
Secretary-Treasurer Emeritus: Richard O. Kissel

Indiana State Executive Board

Vice-President Report
MIKE WHITED

Brothers and Sisters;
The 2016 General Assembly session is just a couple short months away. When the 2015 session ended, President Hanify and I started preparing for the next session, attending many fundraisers and working on legislation for next year. We have also been traveling around Indiana meeting with legislators in their home districts to educate them about the 1977 Police and Fire Pension Fund. We have been doing this for several years, educating legislators so that they understand that our pension is more than just a pension: It also provides a long and short term disability, a survivor’s benefit and a death benefit, all rolled into a well-designed fund at a low cost to Cities and Towns. Also, we talk about how well the 1977 Pension Fund is funded, currently at 105.5% funded. We hope by educating our legislators now we can prevent any negative proposed changes to our pension in the future.

Pension Management Oversight Commission (PMOC) met and Steve Russo from INPERS gave a report on the seven pension funds they administer. Mr. Russo was very excited to report on our pension fund, particularly that it was the first one in Indiana to go over 100% funded. This is great news and it further supports our stance that the 1977 Pension fund is a well-designed plan.

President Hanify and I have also been working on new legislation for next year with Raeanne Orebaugh. Raeanne is the widow of fallen Muncie Firefighter Scott Davis who was killed in a roof collapse while fighting a church fire in 2011. Raeanne would like to see some uniform decal on buildings in a discrete location warning firefighters if that building has any manufactured lumber or has lightweight construction inside. Simple, right? Who wouldn’t want to do this? Except that there are a few groups that will try to stop the passage of this type of legislation. President Hanify and I are very committed to this issue not only because Scott’s widow is asking for it, but for the safety of all firefighters in Indiana. I am sure we will be asking you to talk to your Legislators in the near future.

Also this summer the PFFUI held a pension seminar in conjunction with the Fallen Firefighter Memorial. Both were well attended. The pension seminar had over a hundred members in attendance who learned a great deal about various pension issues. At this year’s Fallen Firefighter Memorial we added five more names to the wall. Two of those names were IAFF members who succumbed to job related cancers. This brings us back to beginning of my letter and why it is so important to have a pension that is more than just a pension.

Penn Township Charter
Secretary-Treasurer Report  

MICHAEL PINKHAM

Brothers and Sisters,

As this year concludes we will continue to be busy preparing for next year’s legislative session and planning our own schedule of activities including a local affiliate leader political educational initiative and legislative conference, our annual convention, and other functions to represent you responsibly and to enhance your local leaders’ abilities to better serve your individual needs.

At the beginning of September we hosted over a hundred affiliated representatives at a pension and disability educational seminar with very positive feedback and it is this type of educational opportunity we want to continue to provide your representatives. Please let us know your thoughts for future programs. The following day we enjoyed a tremendous turnout for our annual LODD Memorial Remembrance Ceremony on the grounds of the Indiana Law Enforcement and Firefighters Memorial on the west side of the Statehouse. We intend to post a video of that ceremony in the near future and we hope all of you participate in the political process by voting and supporting candidates favorable to the issues and the principles important to our family of firefighters.

We’ll strive to maintain the bipartisan support we enjoy with political allies across party lines as we continue to be advocates protecting and enhancing the benefits of firefighters throughout the state. But certainly we could not have achieved this success without your important support. Your financial commitments are critical to the success of our legislative initiatives. Please continue to help us in these efforts by contributing to the Indiana Firefighters Political Action Committee. Our goal of membership commitments equal to a minimum of one dollar per member per payday can make a tremendous difference and that’s all we are asking to assist us in our advocacy efforts.

Our Indiana Career Professional Firefighter Special Recognition License Plates remain available both for your vehicles and motorcycles. Your support of this program also greatly subsidizes our abilities to provide opportunities for your local representatives to increase their knowledge and experiences to better serve you. Please remember that authorization forms are not required and we encourage you and members of your family to obtain these plates demonstrating your pride in your career and in support of our programs.

Finally, while pensions, public pensions particularly, have been under attack across this country in recent years, and even a few pundits have targeted Indiana, we are ecstatic to be able to report that INPRS, the Indiana Public Retirement System, has reported that for the fiscal year recently ending June 30, 2015, the funding status of the 1977 Police Officers’ and Firefighters’ Fund is now at 105.5%, a fully funded status.

Please visit our Facebook page and our website at www.pffui.com for updated information, including a calendar of scheduled Local Affiliate, State Union, and International Union activities.

I wish you all a safe and enjoyable holiday season. It is an honor and a privilege to continue to represent you and your families.
Brothers and Sisters of the PFFUI, 
Looking back at this past year, we have had many successes. The 39th annual convention of the Professional Firefighters Union of Indiana, hosted in the 1st District by South Bend Local 362, was one of them. Local 362 did a fabulous job at making sure that everyone had a good time and everything went smoothly. One issue that came up during convention was how large the 1st district was growing, with nineteen very active locals. There was discussion from the PFFUI executive board before convention asking if every local was getting the services that they felt they needed because of the number of locals. At convention we discussed it in the caucus, during which the 1st District decided unanimously to keep the district size as is and that there was no need to break up the district.

The PFFUI executive board met in July and talked about the convention, and what we can do for the future for the state organization. The state board always tries to figure out what our members may need and different ideas for workshops that will help members in their locals. One workshop that we all agreed on was to have a pension seminar. The pension seminar was held August 31, and was very well attended. Every local in the state organization was allowed at least two members to attend at little or no cost to their local. This seminar was also tied into the State Memorial on September 1st, which allowed many Locals to attend.

IAFF General Secretary-Treasurer Tom Miller will not be seeking another term. I, along with the rest of the PFFUI executive board, cannot tell you enough how much help Brother Miller has given to me and our state’s organization in his positions with the IAFF and the PFFUI. He will be missed but we wish him a happy retirement with his wife Barb.

The 1st District has gone through a number of issues that I hope we don’t have to deal with again. A firefighter in our district has been charged with stealing more than $30,000. He served as a treasurer for a local in the 1st District, using fellow firefighters’ union money to pay for personal items. Most locals should have in their Constitution and Bylaws language that gives checks and balances. What I mean by that is that somebody on your board, such as the trustees or a separate entity, should be able to go over the books quarterly to prevent this from happening. If you have a question about how to implement this please call me.

Finally, on a sad note: We had two brothers in our district pass away all too early. Hammond Local 556 Brother Mike Dernulc passed away suddenly of cancer in late March. Brother Dernulc served on Local 556 executive board as treasurer for many years. He also had the honor to serve as a sergeant at arms years ago at the IAFF convention in Boston. Mike truly believed in the union and he was there for anything that he could do to help. Mike was a close friend of mine and he leaves behind a nine-year-old son Trevor and his wife Tracy. I made a promise to Mike before he passed away that his son, Trevor, would never forget that he is the son of a great firefighter. Mike’s family and I would like to thank everyone who attended his wake and funeral. Firefighters from throughout the state helped give Mike the best send off they could and that’s what Mike deserved.

The 1st District also lost a truly great union member from Valparaiso Local 1124, Fire Chief David Nondorf. Dave started with the Valparaiso Fire Department in 1989. He was a union president for 11 years, then became chief in 2004 until 2015 when he passed away, but never forgot what it meant to be part of the rank and file. He served as a trustee in the 1st District and state PAC. He was a huge driving force at getting the state PAC up and running. David passed away at the end of August. David leaves behind his wife, Kristy’s two sons Nick and Zack and his daughter Madison. Hundreds came out to give their final goodbyes to David.

I am very grateful for having the pleasure of knowing Dave. He truly believed in fighting for was right for firefighters and their families.

Second District
RON MEIKLE - VICE PRESIDENT
Greetings to our Brothers and Sisters, 
The 2nd District has been very busy over the last several months with a myriad of activities. It never ceases to amaze me when I contemplate the coaches, scout leaders, church leaders and fundraising efforts that professional firefighters regularly volunteer as to make their community a better place. Add in family duties, job requirements, friends and social gatherings and we begin to wonder how any of us keep our sanity as we deal with the daily pressures of life.

Lafayette firefighters have shown diligence as they worked with the Chief to implement the WPE. It has been a long road to dispel rumors, calm fears and work in good faith with the administration to accomplish this goal. Full implementation will begin in 2017. Until then, firefighters will put forth a concerted effort to maintain themselves in peak physical shape.

New Castle firefighters have reported that the city has adopted a LOIT for the upcoming year. This will result in an additional $700,000 for public safety and the Fire Department is looking to add staffing to return to past manning levels that have diminished due to attrition. New Castle firefighters have also gone many years without a raise, and things are looking more positive that this trend may possibly end soon.

Ft Wayne firefighters will add staffing next year as a SAFER Grant has been awarded to FWFD. $1.2 million has been earmarked to pay for 10 additional firefighters and 5 more will be covered by the normal means. The class of 15 will begin the academy early in January with an expected graduation date in May.

Alexandria, Anderson and Muncie firefighters combined efforts to host Fire Ops 101 on September 19 at the Anderson Fire Department Training
Grounds. Politicians, media personnel and community leaders found out through practical exercises what it is like to be a firefighter for a day. All drills were completed in full turnout gear and a true appreciation was gained by each participant to the daily challenges that firefighters face.

Additionally, Ft Wayne also hosted Fire Ops 101 on October 10. Twenty participants were put through their paces as they experienced auto extrication, roof ventilation, search and rescue with SCBA and a live fire experience in the flashover chamber. Participants in both of these exercises were given a helmet that they wore throughout the day as a memento to permanently remind them of the daily struggles that firefighters face. Each participant walked away with a much better understanding of the obvious dangers, and also the subtle issues that the public rarely considers. If your local is interested in hosting a Fire Ops 101, contact your PFFUI District Vice President for more information and assistance.

Lastly, I attended two funerals of firefighters from different departments recently. One was killed off duty and the other was murdered on duty while collecting for MDA. Both are tragic and many friends and family were left coping with the results of such horror. The thought that kept recurring in my mind is this: Always cherish those closest to you at every opportunity. You are loved and needed by many.

Third District

MARK A. MASTISON - VICE PRESIDENT

Brothers & Sisters of the PFFUI:
Welcome one again from the 3rd District. I hope your Locals were active in your local elections. Win or lose, when you play the political game, you have to be prepared to continue the fight, no matter what. We always like to win, but sometimes a loss will still be productive. If the candidate that we didn’t support wins, then our job becomes either to convince them it is best to work with us, or at least not take the position of anti-public safety. Sometimes, the hardest thing to do is to explain to the politician is that we endorse candidates based on our issues, nothing else. Once they understand our issues, it is easier for them to understand us.

For the most part, things seem to be going well in the 3rd District. Locals have strong leadership that continues to fight for pay and working conditions for our union brothers and sisters. Some have city administrations that work well and support their fire departments. Not all are so lucky. But our members deserve leadership, and that is what our local leaders strive to give them. I would like to congratulate Local #758 out of Terre Haute. They took it upon themselves to make sure that every member of the Terre Haute Fire Department that paid the ultimate price and lost their lives in the line of duty was given their final recognition by the IAFF and had their names placed on the wall at the Fallen Firefighter Memorial in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Any name to be added has to be thoroughly researched and have documentation submitted. This is a time consuming process, but it ensures that our union brothers and sister will be remembered for their sacrifice. In Evansville, Brothers Chris Waggner and Mike Bacon have researched over 100 years of Fire Department history and have found names that will be added in the future to memorials in the State of Indiana and in Colorado Springs. Thank you, Brothers, for your hard work.

IAFF General Secretary-Treasurer and Local 416 member Tim Miller has announced his coming retirement from the IAFF with the convention in Las Vegas next summer. Brother Miller and his wife, Barb, have spent the majority of their lives fighting for the good fight for our union and Brother Miller is a true icon. Thank you Brother Miller for all you have done for us.

8th District Vice President Paul Hufnagel has also announced his retirement effective at the convention in Las Vegas. Paul was the State President of Michigan when he replaced Tom Miller as our 8th District Vice President. Paul is a tireless worker who was always just a phone call away when needed, and always made sure Local leaders had what they needed. Thank you Brother Hufnagel for your service.

Our own PFFUI President Tom Hanify has announced he will run for the 8th District Vice President at the IAFF convention. If your Local is not sending delegates to the convention, please contact your District Vice President to make sure that your votes will be properly presented at convention.

We have several events coming up next year. In February, the PFFUI will be hosting a Political Training in conjunction with the Thomas H. Miller Legislative Seminar. The PFFUI State Convention will be in Indianapolis and of course we have the IAFF Convention in August. I look forward to seeing you at future events. Remember your PFFUI Executive Board works for you. Never hesitate to call whenever needed.
Fourth District

BONNIE HENSLEY - VICE PRESIDENT

Greetings from the Fourth District,

We’ve said goodbye to summer and winter is fast approaching. L416 firefighters attended the World Police and Fire Games in July. Local 416 hosted several activities for our union members over the summer including a family pitch in to watch July 4th fireworks, Symphony on the Prairie - the Music of Journey, an Indianapolis Indians game with cookout, and an Indy Eleven soccer match with pregame tailgate. Another fun volunteer opportunity, FishIn with a firefighter was well-attended at the Indiana State Fair on August 15. Sponsored by the DNR, it was fun for all involved.

L416 hosted the PFFUI’s statewide pension seminar on August 30, which was followed by the annual Indiana Fallen Firefighters Memorial remembrance the next day. It was great weather and our best turnout so far. The speaker Raeanne Orebaugh, widow of Muncie firefighter Scott Davis, did a great job. If you have not attended this event, think about adding it to your calendar next year.

On September 22, L416 hosted its Fire Ops 101. Twenty-three guests from the City-County Council, Statehouse, Lawrence, Beech Grove, Speedway, Decatur Township and local television news attended. They participated with union members in EMS and fire scenarios and learned about what we do.

L416’s voted overwhelmingly in favor of moving forward with the union hall building expansion. A parking lot across the street is currently nearing completion, the Firefighter’s Credit Union is being built in the current parking lot on Massachusetts Av, and the hall addition will begin soon as well.

The Indianapolis EMS district experienced a work schedule restructure in June that they fought against and lost. They no longer have any members on the 24 hour shift. Keeping a positive outlook and moving forward, they continue to show up and work on staffing, recruitment and retention issues at their labor management meetings.

The IFCA Wellness Fitness Committee met and will be hosting a training seminar for Personal Fitness Trainers in December. Winners of the Leadership in Fitness Excellence (LIFE) awards were Bargersville FD (combined department) and Fishers FD (professional). Brazil FD and South Bend FD tied for second.

IFD district swore in a recruit class of 30 in August, with another class of 42 scheduled to begin this coming February. There is a promotion process in progress, as well as proposed changes to merit law. The merit law changes will move the minimum time on the job required to be promoted from 5 to 8 years, with 3 years minimum time in grade. So the least seniority you can have to be a lieutenant is 8, captain is 11, and battalion chief is 14.

Wayne, Pike, and Decatur Townships continue keeping tabs on the move for county consolidation.

Fifth District

TONY MURRAY - VICE PRESIDENT

This fall the PFFUI hosted a one-day pension fund and benefits seminar for local union officers and pension secretaries. Attendance exceeded expectations and feedback has indicated that the presentations provided valuable information important to our locals. This seminar was held in conjunction with the annual memorial remembrance ceremony next to the state capitol. The ceremony was very well attended which allows the families of our fallen to know that their loved ones and our sisters and brothers will not be forgotten. This year’s ceremony was especially noteworthy because for the first time since passage of the line of duty presumptive occupational disease law, two members were inscribed in the granite because the cancer that ultimately took their life was determined to result from exposures suffered in the line of duty. Not only is it important to memorialize these members but also determining LODD entitles their survivors to benefits that are duly deserved for their service. For a moment each year, we pause to remember the legacy left by all that are etched on those solemn granite columns.

Many locals around the district have held events that benefit great causes including MDA, breast cancer awareness, men’s cancers in ‘Movember’ and projects specific to local communities. Several locals across the state have held or are planning Fire Ops 101 events. These are all great ways to engage citizens and decision makers. We are the fabric of our communities on the job and off. Keep up the good work.

Congratulations to Zionsville members on electing Local 4416 as their ‘exclusive recognized representative’ under meet and confer. Despite efforts to defeat, the measure passed by over 76% margin.

Shelbyville Local 2008 has been working to manage a consultant’s report of the department. As anticipated, many inaccuracies and misinterpretations were included as part of this out of state consultant report. President BK McKenney, E-Board, and members have been working diligently to provide prospective on services and response capabilities. They have benefited from an in-depth array of resources and services provided by subject matter experts at the IAFF. Customized information and analysis has been applied to assist this local in effectively countering points made by the consultant. Local 2008 has worked hard with decision makers to help educate them in an effort to collectively improve the department and product the members provide to the citizens. The local’s ability to share expert information with command, elected decision makers, and the community is proving to be an effective tool in helping prepare for all hazards in department’s large service area.

In closing, I would like to wish President Hanify all the best as he meets with members and leaders around the 8th District of the IAFF. We are all aware of the work President Hanify does for the Sisters and Brothers of the PFFUI. We know if elected 8th District VP he will work just as hard for all members of the district and IAFF. Good luck, Tom.
Sixth District

On September 11th, Bloomington had their annual 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony. Indiana Professional Firefighters Union President Tom Hanify spoke and gave heartfelt remarks. I am including some of the remarks I gave as my tribute to those who lost their lives on 9/11. All of my Public Safety Brothers and Sisters, take care of each other today. You all are in my prayers, Semper Fi.

“Each year, we as a community, come together to show respect and remember the thousands of lives lost on this day 14 years ago. On that day, three hijacked planes caused 2,977 deaths. Of the 2,606 fatalities in New York alone, 343 firefighters, 72 police officers and 8 EMS workers, men and women whose job it was to save everyone else, gave their lives trying to do so.

In New York and Washington DC, the unprovoked attack shook the United States to its core. But, as was exemplified by the actions of passengers on flight 93, we as a country fought back against those who would do us harm. That fight has not been without sacrifice. Since 9/11, the war on terror has taken the lives of over 6,700 United States service members and wounded over 50,000. There are more than 71,000 9/11 first responders and survivors receiving medical treatment and monitoring for injuries and medical issues associated with the attacks. The deaths, injuries and ailments to these Americans provide a reminder of the continued sacrifice and challenge that 9/11 brought on this country.

As a nation, we have slowly returned to a sense of normalcy, but for those who still fight daily reminders of 9/11, we need to take time to recognize this anniversary and to remind ourselves of the sacrifice that so many gave that day and continue to give.

We come to remember the members of our military who aren’t told to join, but volunteer to keep our nation strong. We come to remember all public safety personnel who put themselves in harm’s way in service to others. We must remember this day because as the years pass, we slowly forget. Much of the current younger generation was not alive on 9/11 and did not witness the attack as it happened. Children younger than 14, might see old news coverage on the anniversary, but there is little to no emphasis on the events of 9/11 taught in schools. It is up to us to make sure they remember.

In conclusion, keep all members of the military and first responders in your thoughts and prayers today and everyday as they continue to keep our country and communities safe.”
2015 Indiana Fallen Firefighters Remembrance Memorial Names

Steven A. Mitchell
Huntington, Sept 14, 2012

Donald M. Hochstetler
Wayne Township, November 2013

James J. Knesek, Sr.
Munster Fire Department, Feb 8, 2014

Tom D. Stevens, Sr.
Bright Volunteer Fire Company (Lawrenceburg)
Mar 17, 2014

Jamie Middlebrook
New Carlisle Fire Department, Aug 5, 2014
The week of September 27th I had the honor and privilege to represent Indiana and Michigan at the IAFF Charitable Foundations 2015 International Burn Camp in Washington D.C. I represented two states because I am from Indiana (FWFD) but was sponsored by the Great Lakes Burn Camp in Michigan. I have attended the Great Lakes Burn Camp for 15 years and was nominated to represent them this year at the International Camp along with Amya Gipson, a 15 year old burn survivor from Detroit Michigan. 45 campers and 45 counselors from every regional burn camp in the US and Canada attended the camp for a week of sightseeing and education in the Washington D.C. area. For many of these campers...and counselors, a trip like this is a once in a lifetime opportunity.

On our first day of arrival we witnessed several timid campers who were complete strangers, except for the fact that they all have a common bond…being a burn survivor. Very much like the Firefighters at the camp, who have an obvious common bond, we all arrived strangers, but left with lifelong friendships and memories. Our trip included tours of many of the historic monuments, a day at the Smithsonian institute, a day in Annapolis at the US Naval academy, and a day at Mount Vernon, just to name a few. We spent an afternoon at Arlington Cemetery where President Schaitberger met with us to watch four of our campers lay an IAFF wreath at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Several grown men had allergy issues that day. Our evenings were spent at Camp Wabanna located in Edgewater Maryland on the Chesapeake Bay where we played games, had camp fires and rested for the next day’s events. More important than the incredible experiences had in our Nation’s Capital, the camp offered fellowship and brotherhood with both campers and fellow counselors, mostly made up of IAFF brothers and sisters from across North America.

My Camper, Amya, has been a burn survivor most of her life. She was burned at the age of two when she was in a running parked car late at night and everyone fell asleep. Somehow the car caught fire and Amya was trapped in her car seat. She has burns over about 40% of her body, including one side of her face. She’ll be the first to tell you not to feel sorry for her. She has an incredible bond with her family and the most “not a victim” attitude I’ve ever seen. I sometimes find myself having a bad day and think about Amya, not because of her burns…But, because of her attitude. I know several people who could learn a lot from Amya…and many of the burn survivors I have had the pleasure of working with.

I would like to personally thank the IAFF, Local 124, the Fort Wayne Fire department and the Great Lakes Burn Camp for allowing me to represent them at the International Burn Camp 2015.

Fraternally Yours,
Eric J. Balliet
Fort Wayne Fire Department
Local #124
PTSD & FIREFIGHTERS
DR. ROBERT L. SMITH, Ph.D.
CLINICAL DIRECTOR - IFD / HAMILTON CO.
PEER SUPPORT GROUPS.

1. FACT: Percent of PTSD reported in general population----8% Among Firefighters= 15-20%
2. Rates of Suicide on the increase
3. Increase in problems regarding behavioral Health---There is still a negative stigma attached to reaching out for counseling assistance/behavioral health wellness.
FireFighters have increased rates of PTSD symptoms from job traumas
• 7% of those reporting go out on early retirement
• PTSD is the only diagnosis that requires a specific causative event. PTSD symptoms are in the following clusters.
  1. Re-experiencing of traumatic even
  2. Avoidance of reminders of traumatic event.
  3. Numbing of emotions following the traumatic event.
  4. Increased arousal (e.g., nightmares, jumpy)
  5. Impairment of functioning on and off of the job.
What does P.T.S.D. cost?
• 4-6 billion $ in two years
• Note: 50% of professional Firefighters are veterans with double exposures to traumas.
• Can be 100% disabling but does not have to be.

FACTS
• It doesn’t have to end a career
• Doesn’t mean going postal
• Is very real
• Stigma is also very real
• Won’t magically heal with time
• Other behavioral health problems associated with P.T.S.D.
• Depression
• Suicide
• Substance Abuse
• Increased violence—both marital and family
What predicts P.T.S.D. in Firefighters?
• Lack of Support (Station’s team has decreased social support)
• A prior diagnosis of PTSD
• Clinically depressive symptoms
• Increased anxiety
• Increased negative appraisal (negative attitude) before a post traumatic event.
• Increased drinking to cope
• A combination of low social support and high stress
What can help?
• Reduce the stigma
• Provide evidence supported resources
• Ask if you see warning signals
• Educate and empower each other
• Consider pre-employment assessments
What to look for:
• Environment: City and culture
• Teams: Do individual crews upport wellness?
• Individuals: people are good at knowing the mental health of peers

Resources:
• Peer support.
• EAP-most departments have one.
• Finding a therapist that uses Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (best research)
• Community based: AA, NA
• Psychological first aid / Resilience Training
• Leadership coaching to reduce stigma
• Education: Fact vs. Fiction
• Policy clarification to line Firefighters

What does FDNY Peer Support Program look like?
** Peer Support Program
• Education/Training with trusted Firefighters (Peers)
• Training for recruits
• Information on website
• Inform how to identify PTSD
• Inform resources in community
• Education campaigns: various topics/posters/presentations
• Education reduces stigma
• Peer program-regular station visits
• Respond to traumatic events
• Department needs to locate resources
• Look at policies that could be obstacles
Indiana Professional Firefighters PAC

The Political Action Committee of the Professional Firefighters Union of Indiana desperately needs your support.

The successes we achieve in the Indiana General Assembly protecting and enhancing our pensions and other benefits could not be realized without participation in the political process. Elected officials at the state level of government have the ultimate ‘say-so’ in the statutes governing virtually every aspect of our careers, particularly our disability and retirement benefits. The state officials we lobby with cross all party lines and we are totally bipartisan in our support of those elected Representatives who support professional Firefighters. These are the individuals who control your disability, retirement, and survivor benefits, and who write the statewide statutes governing merit systems, collective bargaining, residency requirements, disciplinary procedures, and countless other issues affecting you and your family as an active or retired Professional Firefighter.

The Indiana Firefighters PAC relies solely upon voluntary contributions. The PFFUI is requesting each member dedicate a minimum of $1.00 per paycheck to build an effective political action committee. These contributions are not deductible for income tax purposes. Fill out the form below and mail it in today. Let us know that we can count on your support.

Indiana Firefighters PAC Contribution Form

Name_______________________________________________________________
Address_____________________________City________________State_________
Zip___________________
Phone_______________________________
Shirt Size (circle one) XXXL XXL XL L M S

Check the box to indicate the level you are joining.

- **PRESIDENT CLUB LEVEL**
  - $200 or more per year
  - ($8.00 per paycheck)
  - Receive an Indiana FIREPAC Windshirt

- **CAPITOL CLUB LEVEL**
  - $100 or more per year
  - ($4.00 per paycheck)
  - Receive an Indiana FIREPAC Polo Shirt

- **LEADERSHIP LEVEL**
  - $50 or more per year
  - ($2.00 per paycheck)
  - Receive an Indiana FIREPAC T-Shirt

- **MEMBERSHIP LEVEL**
  - $26 or more per year
  - ($1.00 per paycheck)
  - Receive an Indiana FIREPAC Car Decal

Mail to:
Indiana Firefighters PAC
P.O. Box 15735
Ft. Wayne, Indiana 46885-5735

To find out how your Local can start a PAC, contact your District Vice-President.
We’re working for you…