

April 19, 2010 Lake Region Meeting Minutes

President Doug Storck called the quarterly meeting of the Lake Region Firefighters Association to order at 7:40 PM. The pledge of allegiance was said. We were welcomed to St. Cloud by host Chief Bill Mund. Chief Mund thanked everyone for coming and introduced the Mayor of St. Cloud, Dave Kleis. Mayor Kleis, a former State Senator, thanked everyone for everything that they do for their communities. Mayor Kleis commented on the commitment St. Cloud has made in regards to public safety. Roll call was taken by St. Cloud Fire Department at the registration table showing 79 firefighters representing 23 fire departments. There were a few vendors and 6 guests in attendance as well. Minutes from the January quarterly meeting were emailed. Reading of the previous meeting minutes were waived with a motion made by St. Cloud and second by Albany to approve the minutes. Motion carried. The treasurer's report was presented showing a current balance in the checking account of \$4,253.99. Motion was made by Albany and second by Waite Park to accept the treasurer's report. Motion carried. There were no State Senators or Representatives in attendance.

REPORTS

Mike Schroeder, MSFDA representative presented his report. The MSFDA board met in St. Cloud on January 23rd. Weather affected the attendance at this meeting. The MSFDA is doing very well financially with over 500 fire departments having paid dues so far. Mike reminded the fire departments that have yet to pay their 2010 MSFDA dues; to do so. Mike noted items that were discussed at their Board meeting including: Fire Service Day at the Capitol which was held March 2nd. This is a very important day with the opportunity to meet with your legislators and get their support on key fire issues. There was a State Networking meeting which was held in Iowa. There are nine Midwestern states that are invited to this meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to share information affecting the fire service today. Many fire departments share similar problems across the Midwest. The Minnesota Fallen Firefighters Memorial Association currently provides assistance to fire departments with a line of duty death if requested. There has been some interest from families who have lost a retired firefighter to have representation from the state fire service present. One state in the networking group does provide this through a volunteer effort, and the MSFDA will continue to look at this in the future. MSFDA President Dan Winkel provided Mike with an update to present on current legislative issues. Hot issues include: The Fire Safety Account, donations of public safety equipment and liability issues, conducting of background checks on firefighters, issuing of firefighter license plates, sales tax exemption issues on purchases, and health care option for purchasing of health insurance through MN Care for volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance personnel. Some of these issues because of financial implications on the State budget will likely face difficulty in the current session. The 135th MSFDA conference will be held in Grand Rapids June 10th – 12th. Everyone was reminded that they need to take care of their own booking of rooms for the conference. There is a block of rooms being held at the various hotels for a period of time, but will be released after May 10th. If a fire department has a member that they would like entered into life membership or included in this year's memorial service, they should get this information to MSFDA secretary Doug Noah or to Mike. Photographs of deceased firefighters can be submitted either to Grand Rapids Fire Dept. or to Mike and will be included in this year's service. There are about twenty quality educational courses being offered at this year's conference. The symposium will feature Captain Mike Gagliano, Seattle Fire Department presenting "The point of no return and how firefighters are dying in structure fires". Captain Gagliano is a nationally known public speaker and has written several documents in regards to firefighter safety. The MSFDA board has been advised that President Winkel will not be seeking re-election at this year's conference. Mike commented on what President Winkel has done in his tenure as a leader in bringing the various fire associations together in regards to the fire service. He will be missed. Shane Schmidt from Alexandria Fire Department, currently MSFDA Vice-President, has announced his candidacy for President. Mike announced that the Region at the annual meeting in October should select a replacement for his position as MSFDA Lake Region Rep., as he will not be seeking re-election.

Bill Thoennes, MSFCA representative presented his report. Currently a membership drive is underway to increase membership in the MSFCA. The goal is to have at least one member from each Lake Region fire department also as a member of the MSFCA. Bill passed around a roster of MSFCA membership from the Lake Region for members in attendance to update any current officer changes that may have occurred. The MSFCA annual conference will be held in Rochester October 21st – 23rd. The conference committee is preparing for the conference and everyone was encouraged to get their room reservations made. Bill announced that the Lake Region had 100% participation of all fire departments in reporting of 2009 MFIRS. Bill thanked everyone for their efforts and stated that there are still 42 fire departments across the State that did not report last year.

Dean Wrobbel, Minnesota Fire Service Certification Board Representative, presented his report. Re-certification notices were sent out to all fire departments. Most re-certifications can now be done online. Group re-certifications with one payment make it a lot easier. There has been one test for Fire Investigator with two house burns scheduled for the practical portion of the certification, one being in the north metro and the other near Hastings. Those interested need to complete the written testing prior to signing up for the practical portion. The practical testing costs \$225 with the written being free and offered online. Rescue Technician certification should be available after June 1st. There is going to be a Haz-Mat Operations certification that will be compliant with NFPA 472. This is in its final stages of development. Only parts of chapter 5 of NFPA 472 are covered in Firefighter I certification which will no longer show completion of Haz-Mat Operations certification. This will be a separate certification specific to NFPA 472. The fee schedule for typical certifications will be going up \$5 after July 1st. Getting renewals in prior to this date will save \$5 for each re-certification. New certifications such as Fire Officer III and IV are being developed with approval coming soon. The certification testing schedule can be viewed by checking the website at: www.mfscb.org.

Jerry Rosendahl, State Fire Marshal was in attendance and spoke to the region. Jerry congratulated the Lake region for attaining 100 % MFIRS reporting last year. He also commended representatives, Mike Schroeder, Bill Thoennes, and Dean Wrobbel of the Lake Region as outstanding, active representatives in their associations. There were six fire fatalities in a fire in Minneapolis on Good Friday which brought the yearly total to 17. One of these deaths will be changed to a medical; from a heart attack reducing the fire death total to 16 as of the meeting date. This figure is one ahead of last year at this time. Fire Marshal Rosendahl highlighted the 2009 activities that the Fire Marshal division was involved in, which included: 424 cases were opened; of these were 111 accidental, 110 incendiary, 90 undetermined, 4 negligence, 6 explosions, and 103 determination could not be made. These cases resulted in 26 referrals to county prosecutors resulting in 12 arrests and 6 convictions. Fire inspectors completed 5,359 initial and follow-up inspections resulting in 13,030 violations recorded. The fire arson tip line received 77 arson tip calls that are passed on to investigators. Jerry highlighted new staff hires; Scott Radke provides training for the online MFIRS reporting and recording of statistics. Governor Pawlenty assigned a task force to look at shared fire and rescue service delivery. This task force is looking at a number of different ways that fire departments can work together in these difficult financial times to still deliver good service. It is expected to release a report by the end of the year. Becki White, Public Fire Safety Educator is available to assist fire departments with public education, and will be getting out to the regions to find out what needs there are. At the MSFCA conference Fire Marshal's workshop, there will be a representative from the State Patrol, speaking about emergency vehicle operation as well as private vehicle operation responding to calls. Fire Marshal Rosendahl updated the Region about legislative action concerning the Fire Safety Account. The State Legislature in an effort to help balance their budget looked for any State accounts that have a balance that is not spent. The Fire Safety Account was one of these. The reason there is a balance in the account is because the monies appropriated for spending by the Legislature is much less than the actual monies that are being received. This has resulted in a surplus balance in the account of which the Legislature approved taking 10.5 million dollars from and moved it to the General Fund during the session. The good news was that the Legislature approved an increase of 2 million dollars in appropriation spending from this account for training to be decided on by the Fire Service Advisory Committee at the recommendation of Commissioner Campion. The Fire Service Advisory Committee will be meeting June 2nd to determine the best use of these monies. It is extremely important that all fire departments utilize the Fire Training board and use these monies towards training needs. Jerry said there are efforts being made

to improve the process of reimbursement and qualifying events that will meet guidelines for use of these monies. Both the MSFDA and the MSFCA will be having space available at their conferences to assist fire departments with submissions for training dollar requests. Fire departments are urged to monitor the Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training & Education's website at www.mbfte.state.mn.us for the next round of applications. Minnesota OSHA has inspected many fire departments over the past five years. There is a list of common problems reported by OSHA on the State Fire Marshal's website at www.fire.state.mn.us. High visibility vests will be an OSHA requirement in future years and the use of them at highway incidents. Fire compliant cigarette legislation has encountered some obstacles specifically in reference to small cigars.

Chief Fire Investigator Rick Kleis addressed the Region. Rick encouraged firefighters to take classes for fire cause investigations as a benefit to their department or a career choice. Many are offered through the Vo-Tech system or the BCA arson series. This training also qualifies for reimbursement from the State training board. State fire investigators are available for basic fire investigation training in two to four sessions. The Thief River Falls basic class has been cancelled because of low registrations. They need to have a minimum of twelve people to run a class to cover costs with a maximum of twenty-five. There were two additions to the fire fatality total for 2009 as a result of burns suffered in a fire raising the total to 34 deaths. The annual death totals are sometimes adjusted to account for fire deaths where a fire department may not have been dispatched. Causes of death are determined by a medical examiner and may be from a medical condition vs. fire caused fatality. These types of incidents may change the overall total for the year end.

John Steinbach, State Fire Investigator thanked members of the St. Augusta and Clearwater Fire Departments for their efforts in an arson conviction trial in Stearns County.

Barry Nelson, VFBA representative presented his report. Barry is the District 6 representative covering the southern portion of the Lake Region. Barry highlighted what the VFBA provides specifically death and disability insurance for volunteer and paid firefighters. The current death benefit is \$20,000 and the disability benefit is \$85 per day up to 190 days. The annual premium is \$7 per firefighter. They are seeing some municipalities dropping coverage for budget reasons; however individual firefighters can choose to pay the \$7 premium and have the coverage. Barry highlighted the past year's activities. There will be a resolution at the annual meeting in Grand Rapids in conjunction with the MSFDA conference to increase the disability benefit to \$100 per day up to 180 days; and a death benefit increase to either \$21,000 or \$22,000. District 6 had no disability claims in 2009, and there were no firefighter deaths in the state in 2009. Barry explained the perimeters for coverage relating to firefighter activities.

There were no DNR representatives at the meeting.

Bill Mund, IAFC Great Lakes Division representative presented his report. The IAFC Great Lakes Division will be sending representatives to the Congressional Fire Service Institute next week to meet with federal legislators to discuss SAFER grant funding, AFG funding, Volunteer Firefighter incentive tax breaks, and Health Care Savings Account. The Health Care Savings Account is a new proposal that could allow a firefighter the ability to roll their lump sum pension upon retirement into an account to use towards health care costs incurred and be tax sheltered. The Great Lakes Division is sending two representatives from each state to a Blue Card Certification program. This program developed by the Brunacini's is command training designed for type IV and V incidents which are normal single family residential type responses. The goal of the program is to train current and upcoming officers with the ability to command these typical incidents. There is an online program with a follow-up simulator which is currently stationed at Spring Lake Park fire station. Bill reminded everyone about the Group Purchasing Program offered through the Great Lakes Division of the IAFC. The website can be found at: www.gld-iafc.org. The bookstore also offers reasonable priced resources as well.

Warren Jorgenson, Fire EMS and Safety Center presented his report. Warren had a couple of handouts available and reminded everyone that nearly everything is available online from the website at: www.firecenter.mnscu.

edu. The AFG program for applications in 2010 should be opening up shortly. The first round of declines has been sent out for the 2009 AFG program. Everyone should check the website. Warren cautioned everyone to not use brand names, model numbers or part numbers in their applications. This could cause their grant application to be declined. Warren highlighted some state legislative issues and stressed the importance of monitoring legislative activity closely. Warren covered some activity of the MN Board of Firefighter Training and Education. The Lake Region had the most applications in the last funding cycle of any region in the state, with 52 applications. Warren stressed the importance of increasing the applications for these training monies to avoid a repeat of this year where the legislature tapped into this funding. Attendance at state fire schools this spring has increased. Fire departments should continue to use up their voucher dollars through the schools in case this program is eliminated. It will be a discussion item at the next meeting on April 22nd. Warren had a handout referencing the National Fire Academy training courses for the fall of 2010 through next year. These are train the trainer courses led by instructors from the National Fire Academy. After completion, the individuals can send their resume and certificate to the State Board of Firefighter Training and be an approved training facilitator for a certain area of training. Minnesota now has a 150 member Type III management team that can assist with Type III incidents.

Scott Schaefer, Alexandria Tech. College coordinator was unable to attend.

Mike Roe, Ridgewater Tech. College coordinator presented his report. Some MNSCU voucher dollars need to be used by June 30th. Mike suggested that fire departments do a better job of forecasting future training needs and planning which will help in the application for monies from the MBFTE. There will be a NFA Leadership III class offered in February of 2011 in Willmar. John Middendorf, retired Chief from Los Angeles will be returning this fall for a class in Willmar; more details to come. Ridgewater College has started a new class called "Fire Scene Tactics & Command" designed for leadership staff on a fire department and incorporates the use of teams for ventilation and fire suppression on a typical fire scene. The training assists with duty assignment, timing of assignments and use of command, etc. Contact any one of the three college coordinators if interested. Mike stated that when an OSHA investigation is conducted, they will look at many areas specifically training records. One area to be concerned with is fit-testing of SCBA masks.

Larry Rieber, St. Cloud Tech College coordinator was attending training at the FDIC and was unable to attend the meeting. Dean Wrobbel, St. Cloud Fire Dept. spoke on his behalf. SCTC still has grant monies available for Haz-Mat or ethanol training if a department has a need. There will be a fire apparatus operator class in Big Lake starting May 3rd. There will be a State certification skills test in Big Lake on May 8th. A fire training advisory committee meeting for SCTC will meet to discuss training needs, and growth of fire training in the St. Cloud area. If interested, contact the college.

OLD BUSINESS

President Storck updated the Region about efforts to start a Lake Region website to replace the Lake Region directory which was not printed last year. President Storck, Jeff Drais (district #2) and members of the board are still working on this issue.

Mike Schroeder, Bylaw committee representative addressed the Region. It has been about seven years since a review of the Bylaws was conducted. The Bylaw committee has met twice and has proposed some updates that will make the Bylaws current. These were presented at the meeting with a before/after appearance. This meeting provided the introduction of the changes with discussion and voting on adoption to take place at the July meeting in Forada. Mike highlighted the changes to those in attendance. There was a motion by Alexandria and second by Waite Park to hold over discussion and voting on the new Bylaws until the next quarterly meeting in July. After a clarification of the correct title for MFSCB representative, the motion carried. Mike then introduced proposed language addressing Associate Membership status which was discussed at the meeting in January of 2010. This will be discussed and included into the new Bylaws if the Region votes in favor at the July meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

There was a motion made by St. Cloud and second by Cold Spring to provide for a moment of silence following the pledge of allegiance while still standing to honor all fallen fighters across the nation. Motion carried.

Bruce West, Homeland Security Emergency Management presented his report. Severe weather awareness week is going on this week. Thursday, will be the testing of all weather sirens at 1:45 and 6:55pm. The siren testing should be used as an effort to develop a plan which can be used in an emergency situation, specifically the location of the safe spot that all family members should meet. Bruce provided an update on spring flooding. There were a few areas of flooding which occurred, however with low amounts of rainfall the flooding was not as severe as anticipated. The focus now has shifted to an increase in fire danger, especially in low marshy areas. Fire danger is very high at this time in the State with the northern areas of the State under an Extreme Fire Danger listing. Deputy Director John Kerr retired from HSEM after 31 years. The new Deputy Director is Wade Setter, who has had a career in law enforcement. There have been several new hires within the HSEM that bring a high quality staff to call on. HSEM is now on Facebook and Twitter. The De-Con trailers are being evaluated to quantify the problems that have been encountered and get feedback from fire departments. HSEM provided a four-hour class at State schools in North Mankato, Brainerd, and Detroit Lakes on the topic of the fire department's role under unified command at an active shooting incident. Bruce will be working with Warren Jorgenson to include and possibly expand on this training topic in next year's school offerings. If a community is interested in putting together a CERT program, they should check the HSEM website at: www.hsem.state.mn.us for further information. HSEM is in the planning stages to look for additional funding for the CAT teams, and Structural Collapse teams. They are also proposing to provide about \$20,000 to each fire department that hosts a De-Con trailer to help offset costs incurred with operating these trailers. HSEM wants to tap monies appropriated to the Fire Safety Account as an effort to insure that these monies are used and not turned back into the General Fund. Hazardous Material Exercise Program funding is available through St. Cloud Tech College and Ridgewater Tech College and can be used for Haz-Mat Operations level training. When doing this training, Bruce urged fire departments to conduct joint training with other nearby departments that would be utilized in an actual emergency. The Cold Zone conference will be coming up in Brooklyn Park on May 13-15. All fire departments should continue to work on ICS training specifically the different NIMS training levels. Bruce provided a handout for First Responder Safety at a Small Aircraft or Helicopter Accident training modular. This can be seen at: www.faa.gov/aircraft/gen_av/first_responders.

Todd Carriveau spoke to the Region about a 2nd annual Firefighters Benefit Softball Tournament that will be held Saturday August 28, 2010 at the Whitney Park fields in St. Cloud. There were eight teams last year, with a hope to have thirty-two teams this year. It will be open to any fire department in the State. This tournament raises money for the MFFMA (Minnesota Fallen Firefighter's Memorial Association). Todd presented a handout with registration and field locations to those in attendance. Deadline for signup is July 1st.

A brief discussion occurred about the change in format used at this meeting in which the meal was served prior to starting the meeting. This was well received and will be utilized at future meetings. The meal was served starting at or slightly before 7:00pm with the meeting starting as close to 7:30 as possible.

The next meeting will be in Forada on July 19th.

Motion to adjourn was made by Waite Park second by Glenwood. Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Tom Zabinski, Secretary/Treasurer