

Legislative Update

March 26, 2011

Pension Issues:

One of the potential impacts of the State Government Finance Bill is a loss of the pension oversight division within the Office of the State Auditor. The bill cuts \$2 million from the Auditor's Budget which would result in the division losing most, if not all of the staff. The exact impact of this is unknown. There would still be certification of fire aid but no training or education, support, or other assistance.

The Senate has named their pension commission members but the house has yet to name theirs. The Office of the State Auditor Pension bill has several needed provisions including a clarification that allows reliefs to pay IRS 900 filing forms and fines from the special fund.

Volunteer State-Wide Pension Plan continues to work with reliefs who want to join. Two more just joined now bringing the total to 20 and ALL 20 have been able to increase their benefits! To learn more contact Dave DeJonge at PERA at dave.dejonge@state.mn.us. The enrollment period is December so you have the rest of the year to investigate.

IRS 990 Issue:

This is a HUGE issue that is not going to go away. In a nutshell; most if not all Minnesota Reliefs are non-compliant with current federal tax law and either have received penalty letters (four so far totaling more than \$50,000 in fines) or will receive a letter or will lose their tax exempt status (means you have to report and pay taxes on all your investment gains). The Fire Chiefs, Fire Department and MARAC are joining with the League of Cities to formulate a strategy to resolve this issue. More information coming later.

Training Opportunity:

See Attached Flyer

Nyle Zikmund, Fire Chief; EFO, CFO, MiFireE
SBM Fire Department
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"Do or do not, there is no try." - Yoda

Residential Sprinklers - HF 460: CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATOR IMMEDIATELY

Is scheduled to be heard on the House Floor this Monday, March 28, 2011. Please call and email your HOUSE member to oppose this bill which:

1. Prohibits the State or ANY local jurisdiction from adopting any code specific to residential sprinklers.
2. Fire services has always been locally delivered, this bill pre-empts that ability.
3. In 1983 the Building Code division created Chapter 1306 which was a local option for additional sprinkler coverage in commercial/industrial buildings if that community wanted to adopt them. HF 460 prevents that from ever happening on the residential side.
4. The bill is premature as the code is NOT even published yet, therefore the Building Code Division cannot start the adoption process which takes 18 months (read another legislative session before they are even close) and circumvents the normal code adoption process.
5. The bill went to one committee (Commerce) was never heard in Public Safety nor in Local Government. The Fire Service had 20 minutes to testify on the single greatest life safety code provision since smoke detectors.

You can find the phone and email for your house member at

<http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/members/hmem.asp>

Attached is a brochure on the facts concerning residential fire sprinklers

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