MSFDA-MSFCA JOINT BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Winter Meeting Minutes
Saturday, February 28, 2009
Radisson Hotel - St. Cloud, Minnesota - 10 a.m.

1. Call to Order

MSFDA President Dan Winkel and MSFCA President Bob Brown called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. A moment of silence was held for Don Deutsch.

2. Discussion on developing regions- Bob Brown and Dan Winkel

President Brown began the meeting by having everyone introduce themselves. He explained the topic for this morning was to discuss methods of improving regional attendance. He raised the question "how do we expect information to be shared?" "Is it from the Boards to the Region or from the Region to the Boards?" Dale Specken and his MSFDA counterpart both interact and that is the expectation for all regional reps from both organizations.

Blogs, my space etc are all next generation's ways of communicating according to Jerry Rosendahl. President Brown stated that our Magazine published in a timely manner was another means of communication. Jim Hansen commented on packets of material that he hands out at regional meetings and other opportunities. Judy Thill wanted a list of best practices to be handed out to add value to the meetings. Some regions reported that 70-75% of their departments were attending and that activities like meals, and raffles helped attendance.

A discussion was held regarding e-mails vs. surface mail. President Winkel asked the question "Are we getting feedback from e-mails?" Some of the membership felt that a surface letter was better. One region thought that all meetings should be held in a central location within the region. Comments were made that 2 meetings/year were not enough and 6/year were too many. SFM Rosendahl commented that there is an e-mail list of all the people who report MNFIRS to his office.

Tom Brace reported that controversy has a way of bringing out more attendance at Regional meetings. The League of Minnesota Cities has a list of fire chiefs and fire departments. While this is a very good list, it is not complete.

Training at Regions needs to be of interest to younger firefighters and needs to be made fun if you want them to jump in. Marty Scheerer suggested "grab someone and make them attend". There is also a need for streamlined presentations once you are able to get them to attend.

There is also a need for a job description for regional reps. This could take the form of a general outline so that a new director would have "the tools for being a director."

Marty Scheerer suggested a magazine article that solicited e-mail addresses and explained how to join a Region. President Winkel discussed the Smoke Eater and thoughts MSFDA has in the future regarding their relationship with that publication. Marty commented that the print media was failing and the future might be newsletters electronically. The problems with Dial Up were discussed in greater Minnesota as a problem with the above mentioned idea.

Marty informed the group of our communication director position for the MSFCA which would be as a paid contractor. President Winkel stated the "we are waiting for the new regional map from the SFM Division and also commented on that fact that some departments migrate to neighboring Regions that they feel more close to then their own.

This concluded a very thoughtful discussion regarding strengthening our Regions.

3. Minnesota Fire Service Foundation- Zikmund
There is a need for a MSFDA representative, a need to replenish the scholarship fund and internally fundraise. Each one of the three organizations has been requested to donate $3000 for 3 statutes. Our site at the State Capitol is still secure.

4. MnFAC Report-Zikmund
The MPFF licensing bill was discussed. There are questions regarding the definition of Full Time as it pertains to firefighters. They are not doing the grandfather provisions and feel that they are losing ground to Police Officers. Ulie Seal stated that this is a bill about jobs and jobs lost.

The "two hatter" issue was discussed and the NVFC is going to wait and see. It appears that the IAFF was an early Obama supporter.

Several additional comments were made regarding the licensing bill which included the news that bill is jacketed and will be introduced next week. DPS Commissioner Campion after being briefed on this bill stated "We are not going to get crosswise with the volunteers." The $75 fee would be paid by the individual according to Tom Thornberg, MPFF President.

The issue of flashing lights was discussed with a report that WI would like to repeal their law. The push for a bill in Minnesota is coming from the Pickwick Fire Department and does not have any support by the MnFAC representatives.

Chief Zikmund feels that the Civil Immunity Bill will pass. He also suggested the need for a study of Ethanol Plant Fires re Rep. Bunn and SFM Rosendahl.

Nyle discussed the Residential Code and the Sprinkler Coalition. He stated there is a need to educate the fire service and wants to have about 15-20 minutes at regional meetings to explain exactly what is being proposed.

Chief Zikmund is looking to build a data base of trainers. He reported on a 60-70% rate of failure for the Haz-Mat Ops test and reminded everyone that he does not set the standards. On line testing was discussed and the big challenge for the fire service is to get trained. Marty Dirnberger expressed concern with "this has got to stop" with what he identifies with industry and vendor driven NFPA standards.

5. Certification Board-Nyle Zikmund
There are 19 people on this Board. Nyle and Terri Zikmund started on September 2007 and got the books in November of that year. They had a balance of $8600 but owed the Pro Board $6500. Their program was built by Monica Correll and they are in need of a new server in their home. They are using a 10-12 year old lap top and they are asking for $2500 from each of the two organizations represented.

MSFCA started this program in about 1998 and Firefighter 1 has been the bread and butter of the program. Four skill stations are planned as there are currently five. Chief Mund stated that "you are going to pay one way or the other." There is a need for a dedicated server at the Zikmund home office. A decision was not asked for today. MSFCA will discuss this request at their retreat on March 20, 2009.

6. Fire Service Day at the Capitol
An estimate of about 200 registrants was reported. There will be an 8:00 am briefing at the hotel before departure to the Capitol. The same shirt as last year could be used with the main issue for 2009 the Fire Safety Account.

7. NVFC Update
The Sheraton in Bloomington MN will be the conference hotel. It was reported that it took between 20-25 thousand dollars to host a conference. They will bring a staff to help with the registration. Minnesota is responsible for one dinner. The conference will be September 22-26, 2010.

8. Fire Service Advisory Committee
Revenue appears to be running from 10.5-10.8 million dollars. The authorization to spend is for 8 million. The Fire Training Board reported 250 applications received with maybe 200 more applications to be received before Monday March 2, 2009 at 5:00 pm. That would be about one-half of the fire departments in the state. There appeared to be a question of what was meant by "in their hands or postmarked."

9. State Fire Marshal Briefing
SFM Rosendahl spoke about the decision to not adopt the 2009 IFC, IRC, and IBC. He indicated that he had taken "some personal heat" on this issue. Jon Nisja of Jerry's staff had indicated that it would cost $120,000 to update the Fire Code alone. Jerry stated a need for educational training at various regions on the issue of sprinklers.

SFM Rosendahl reported on a bill that would reduce fire drills from five to two. They have already been reduced from nine to five. The SFM will be "sharing a concern" on this issue.

A question was raised as to how much money will be taken out of the Fire Safety Account. Several different opinions were discussed with an added concern that the 2% pension money may also be at risk.

PFC Class B Foam issue was talked about and the Chiefs Magazine Article was cited. If you train with it, do not use it over the city well. MNFIRS was discussed with about 100 Fire Departments mentioned who had not sent in their data. Region 8 and Region 12 have a 100% reporting. SFM Rosendahl needs help in getting reports in. DNR requires MNFIRS reporting to receive money from them. Some fire departments regard the MNFIRS requirement as an unfunded mandate. The wonderful person who manages this Program(Nora) for the SFM was reported to be "nervous".

A question by Rep. Bunn regarding Ethanol Emergencies may lead to a report of said subject by the State Fire Marshal.

10. Joint Fast Team
A brief history of the Fast Team was reviewed. President Brown indicated that he had spent a great deal of personal time on Luverne Fire Department support. The basic tenant of the Fast Team is to help the Fire Department manage their loss. The regional representative from both organizations will work together under this joint effort.

11. Statewide Mutual Aid Plan
This program is a work in progress with a draft available in June of 2009 for review and comment. This group has been meeting monthly. The concept is to use local mutual aid then call the State Duty Officer for additional help if needed. Randy Polzin met with Ann Gergen of the League of MN Cities regarding changes in Chapter 12. This process is for a major event and will not do away with local programs. The Fire Map program is no longer accurate.

12. DNR Report
Gene Mannelin reported that DNR was reducing its staff in 23 SW Minnesota Counties. Tom Romaine of DNR has about 18 months left in this territory. Gene presented a Montana Bill that dealt with the issue of lying to investigators.

13. Departmental Funerals
A general discussion was undertaken in terms of assisting departments with funerals. The value of CISD was discussed and highly recommended. SFM Rosendahl stated that our two groups should sit down with MFFMA and determine their desired role. Dan Winkel suggested that we "Walk very carefully".

14. New Business
Several comments were made regarding the payment of dues to the two organizations. General consensus was that both organizations have value and neither group will downplay the other to enhance their own position.

MSFDA will have additional training at their conference with the hope that more chiefs will see value in attending. Bill Mund discussed a program that trains mentors for safety. Bill asked the question "Why are we still rolling tankers? This is a MI program that is built around the theme of "Courage to be Safe".

A pension provision that allows a member to return after retiring in 60 days was discussed. Numerous examples were mentioned where people felt that had to retire or suffer a large fiscal loss and the impact that these retirements had on the fire departments they left.

15. Adjournment at 3:05 pm
Adjournment came at 3:05 pm at the call of the two presidents. Notes and arrangements for this meeting were handled by Tom Brace of the MSFCA.