



THE REVIEW

Central Arizona Fire and Medical - 8603 E. Eastridge Dr., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 – **January 16, 2020**

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Quote of the Week

"Cancer started the fight, but I will finish it."

-Unk



The Chief's Desk



PFFA President Bryan Jeffries speaking at the Capitol. Photo Credit: AZ Republic

Yesterday, Thursday, was a special day down at the Capitol for a number of reasons. First and foremost, my good friend and our PFFA President was able to venture out and make his first public comments since completing his chemo treatments for Testicular cancer! It is inspiring to see Bryan's determination and spirit as he works to beat this horrible disease. Second,

Senator Paul Boyer and Senator Heather Carter introduced legislation that would add breast and ovarian cancer to the presumptive law. Additionally, the legislation will close the loop hole that some bad actors in the insurance industry have exploited to deny coverage.

The Governor, the State's Attorney General, and many others have called on the insurance industry and now the legislature to put an end to the games and provide coverage per the law. Years of studies and data support the fact that firefighters are far more likely to be diagnosed with a variety of cancers than the general public related directly to our exposure to carcinogens.

What I've found interesting is that across the United States more and more states are passing presumptive laws. In each one, it seems that the insurance industry has been able to exploit loopholes in an effort to deny claims. This leaves firefighters and their families who should be focused on their treatment battling for coverage. I recently forwarded an article to all of you out of Ohio related to their battle for cancer coverage. The insurance industry in that state expressed concerns that covering firefighters for cancer could cost upwards of \$70 million. In reality, the costs in that state have been less than \$3 million. Financial woes are the same argument that the insurance lobby in the State of AZ uses when talking with lawmakers. The facts do not support their argument. For them it is simply that any additional coverage will cut into their substantial bottom line.

We are working with our partners around the state to revive our efforts to start a statewide trust, as we've discussed previously. With Bryan Jeffries sidelined, dialogue about how exactly to move forward has been put on hold. However, as Bryan continues to regain his strength and gets back in the swing, we will renew our efforts to move the trust forward. Continued on Page 4

Upcoming Events:

Jan 20 – Martin Luther King Day – office is open
Jan 21 – Senior Leadership Academy Opening Day
Jan 22 – Senior Leadership Academy, FRI site visit
Jan 23 – Yuma County Chief's Meeting for AFCA in Yuma, Yavapai County Chiefs Meeting, Prescott Valley Town Council Meeting

Board Meeting:

January 27th Administration
CAFMA – 1700-1830



FIREFIGHTERS AND CANCER RISK

By: Leukemia and Lymphoma Society

All firefighters, regardless whether they are career or volunteer, put their own lives at risk to save others in their communities. In addition to the danger of putting out fires, firefighters are at an increased risk for different types of cancer due to the smoke and hazardous chemicals they are exposed to in the line of duty. There have been multiple studies that show this increased risk for cancer.

Why is there a risk for cancer?

Modern homes and buildings contain many synthetic and plastic materials which create more smoke when burning than natural materials. When materials burn, they release a number of carcinogens (cancer-causing agents) including polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), a group of more than 100 chemicals. Exposure to some PAHs can cause cancer. Firefighters may also encounter other known carcinogens such as asbestos and diesel exhaust. These carcinogens can be inhaled or absorbed through the skin.

Wearing the proper personal protective equipment (PPE), including self-contained breathing apparatuses (SCBA), offers protection and lessens exposure. However, toxic chemicals can still penetrate the turnout gear and expose the skin to toxins.

Firefighter Cancer Registry. Due to new legislation passed in July 2018, The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) will create a registry of firefighters to track links between workplace exposures and cancer. With the data collected by this registry, researchers will be able to better understand the risk of cancer among firefighters.

[lls.org](https://www.lls.org)

Cancer Is the Biggest Killer of America's Firefighters

By: Tom Costello

BOSTON — For the nation's oldest fire department, the alarm sounds 234 times a day.

Car accidents, medical calls, rescues and fires keep Boston firefighters busy round-the-clock.

But while they are equipped with state-of-the-art apparatus and protective clothing, what's killing them is a danger they often can't see: cancer.

Boston Fire Commissioner Joseph Finn called it an "epidemic."

"We're seeing a lot of younger members in their 40s, early 40s, who've got 20 years on the job, who are developing these cancers at a very young age," Finn told NBC News.

Each month, another three active or just-retired firefighters are diagnosed with cancer. The cancer rate among firefighters is more than twice the rate for Boston residents — and it's illegal for firefighters in this city to smoke

At the Dana Farber Cancer Center at Brigham and Women's Hospital, firefighter Glenn Preston is being treated for blood cancer.

He's already had chemotherapy and a bone marrow transplant. He invited NBC News to his hospital room to talk, but the crew had to wear surgical masks and gloves, swabbing the camera gear down with alcohol to lessen the risk of introducing a virus that could prove fatal to Glenn.

nbcnews.com

Chief's Desk Continued

Senator's Boyer and Carter will be pushing hard for the new cancer bill to move through the senate and the house. In my personal opinion, the momentum is on our side especially with the Governor's support, and the extensive media coverage the issue has gained. The science is undisputable and solidly supports the fact that our exposure to carcinogens throughout our career puts us at a much higher risk.

The upside to all of this is that our industry has made great strides in a short period of time to better protect our frontline personnel. Agencies large and small have changes in ways not necessarily seen before in the fire service. New policies for how and when we don our breathing apparatus, how to more safely handle our gear, changes in apparatus and station design, etc. have been implemented in the just the last few years. Why have these efforts been so successful? The data behind the changes, and the fact that labor and management are working as one to provide a safer environment.

I would be remiss at this point if I did not remind everyone that we can mitigate the risk, but we cannot eliminate the risk. A firefighter's job simply comes with inherent risks. Some are avoidable, and some are not. Your situational awareness can be second to none, but if someone on the highway isn't paying attention, you can still end up struck and killed as we see time and again. That said, we need to do whatever we can to mitigate our risks, maintain our situational awareness, and work towards a long/healthy retirement.

AFDA Conference:

Some of us are at the annual Arizona Fire District Association (AFDA) conference in Laughlin through Saturday. I had the opportunity once again this year to enjoy Firefighter Doug Copenhaver playing the pipes as part of the opening session. In my opinion, we are blessed to have someone of Doug's talent in our organization, representing us across the state, and leading our Pipes and Drums Band - outstanding job Doug!

Chief Randy Karrer and I will be presenting Leading beyond Fire Department Operations this morning. The class was well received at the summer conference, at the Riverside Leadership Academy, and at FRI in Atlanta last year. Hopefully we don't screw it up this time around.

Executive Director of AFDA, John Flynn, covered some of the upcoming legislative session and what we might expect. As there is every year, there are bills that we like and some that would certainly create some challenges for us. There is some chatter in the legislature that they would like to reduce the corporate property tax rate from 18% to 15%. You may recall that over a period of years the rate was reduced from 25% to 18%. For Fire Districts at the \$3.25 cap, a reduction in tax rates for business means a cut in their overall budget. At the same time their pension liability continues to increase with no good options for additional revenue to cover the expense. I think you can see the dilemma.

To put this in the simplest terms, if we need \$100 dollars to operate, we do not care who it comes from we just need a \$100 to cover operational expenses. If I'm at my max tax rate, and someone sends an edict that I cannot collect the \$100, then I do not have the funds needed to operate. Ultimately, services are cut in an effort to meet the agencies financial obligations. I'm not saying that businesses do not deserve a break, but I am saying that a state mandated reduction in revenues for non-state agencies will likely prove problematic. If your agency still has room on their mill rate, then you can increase the mill rate to ensure you can still collect the \$100 needed for operations. The costs under that scenario are spread more evenly between businesses and residential. We will see how this plays out over the session.

Director Packard and I had the privilege of attending opening session for the legislature this past Monday as a guest of Senate President Fann and Representative Pierce. It was more of a pomp and circumstance day, but that did not prevent me from talking with them as well as some of the Governor's staff about ambulance issues in the state. I gave them a brief on the white paper and let them know to expect it in the next few weeks. Interestingly, those I spoke with on the Governor's staff were unaware of the challenges we face throughout the state. We'll ensure they get the paper and that we have an opportunity to visit with them again.

Firefighter Testing:

Firefighter written testing and initial oral boards are complete. We will be coordinating Chief's interviews in the next week or two, depending on our schedules. The total number we need to hire this year is yet to be determined, but expect to pick-up five or so out of this round.