



## Presidents Report June 23, 2011

Having returned from Washington D.C. and the Congressional Fire Service Institute Caucus (CFSI) and dinner, I must say what an experience. Washington D.C. is normally a very busy and exciting atmosphere. This year it was literally the proverbial “zoo”. The looming government shutdown only added to the drama. Appointments with Representatives were put on hold as floor votes were continually occurring. The theatrical speeches on the floor only added to the drama. Impromptu news conferences were all over Capitol Hill as representatives were giving their opinions on the budget dilemma.

This year again I worked with the Western Fire Chiefs Association (WFCA) to meet with members of the Oregon delegation in Washington D.C. The main focus this year was the dedication of the 20MGZ of radio frequency for public safety, D Block. The D Block is the equivalent of the interstate highway system for radio frequencies. Public safety agencies will have access to the super highway for critical radio communications. Other issues discussed were the full funding of the SAFER and FIRE Grants to 405 million dollars each. Congressman Wu was working on reintroducing legislation that would clarify the IRS W2/1099 form issue on volunteer compensation.

I also met with staff members of Missouri Congresswomen Hartzler as well Co Chair of the CFSI Caucus, Washington Representative Echart to discuss NAEFO and our goals. It was very beneficial to speak with Representative from our State Associations and acknowledge the importance that NAEFO has on State and National issues.

### D block

It has been over 10 years since the D block debate began. D block would authorize an additional 10MHz for public safety use. A good analogy of D block is it would be the equivalent for radio communication across the country to the interstate highway system is for vehicles. Local jurisdiction would have the ability to access the “highway” for better communications. The Obama Administration shifted its position on D block and now is behind the legislation. The D block legislation, S-911 cleared the Senate Commerce Committee and awaits action in the full Senate.

### Homeland Security

Progress has been made on H.R.2017 that funds the programs and activities of the Department of Homeland Security. Currently the FIRE and SAFER grants are to be funded at \$335 million each. This amount is an increase from the original amount but not the \$405 million that was appropriated in 2011. Additional amendments were approved that allowed the use of SAFER grants to avoid layoffs and to rehire laid off firefighters. The waiver also relaxed certain budgetary requirements that have proven prohibitive to departments to apply for the SAFER grants. Please contact your elected officials in Washington D.C. and ask for their support of these important pieces of legislation.



### NAEFO Conference

NAEFO encourages elected fire officials to attend this year's NAEFO conference to be held in Las Vegas on Sept. 19-20. The host hotel the Orleans has given NAEFO a great room rate for the conference. There will be interesting speakers on hand to talk about ISO, Fire Chief and elected officials relationships, a representative from the USFA and the President elect of the IAFC Chief Al Gillespie. It should be a worthwhile trip and conference for elected fire officials to attend. Go to the NAEFO website at [www.naefo.org](http://www.naefo.org) to register.

### Fire Rescue International

I will be moderating an elected fire officials round table discussion in Atlanta Georgia in August. On the panel will be retired Fire Chief and former Fire District Director George Dunkel and former Washington Fire Commissioner Brian McMahan. Both these individuals have a wealth of knowledge and experience to share. It should be a lively discussion as elected fire officials can ask questions regarding Chief/elected officials relationships, public meeting and records laws, ethics and the list goes on.

If you are not a member of NAEFO, I highly encourage you to join. Membership in NAEFO shows a support that elected fire officials need to ensure legislative issues affecting the fire service and your a ability to govern your local fire departments our addressed.

Mark Kreutzer  
NAEFO President