



Executive Director's Report

April 10, 2021

Personal Activities

I continue to be the Court-appointed Special Master and Receiver of the Tightwad Fire Protection District, which is in rural Missouri about 90 miles southeast of Kansas City, Missouri.

The Court is expected to announce whether the Board has three or five members and who, if any of the seven are on the board and if not, who is or will be on the Board. The Court may choose to fill any or all the vacancies until a future election.

I will also begin performing consulting work for two international companies. One company specializes in third-party assessments of management systems for quality, IT service management, information security management, and environmental, health, and safety. As I compose this report, I am awaiting word whether I will be conducting a three-day assessment next week of a company in Hungary. The other organization a risk management software company.

The University of Missouri has hired an additional instructor to teach the statutorily required board training for directors of ambulance and fire protection districts, so having a second instructor teaching this course will lessen my workload, although I soon will be developing an online course on Missouri's open meetings and records law (probably after I am discharged as Special Master and Receiver).

All the above activities, along with NAEFO, will keep me busy just about full-time.

Streamline Platform-based NAEFO Website

The NAEFO website has been on the Streamline platform for almost three months without any issues such as downtime, components not working, etc. (all characteristics of the website on the previous platform). NAEFO continues to use the GoDaddy reseller for the naefo.org and naefo.com domain registrations and email service because Streamline currently does not offer these products.

The ability to make updates to the NAEFO website is easier than the previous platform although there are sometimes tradeoffs in design limitations of the new platform; however, I have been impressed by Streamlines ability to finesse a few things into the new platform (with no charge).

Transition from Mailchimp to Streamline Engage

After watching some self-paced webinars, attending two video conference webinars, and a one-on-one "hand holding" session, NAEFO is ready to transition from Mailchimp to Streamline Engage. The biggest task ahead is the creation of multiple mailing lists and importing the MailChimp contacts into Engage.

I am going to perform a small-scale test of Engage by sending out the information for the June 5th Board of Directors meeting via Engage. A final task will be to add a sign-up button on NAEFO's website to collect emails of people who would like to hear from NAEFO.

I am disappointed that only email addresses are maintained on the Engage contact list. I have encouraged Streamline to add at least minimal fields to create the beginning of a Community Relations Management (CRM) database, e.g., name, title, organization name, organization and personal mailing addresses, telephone numbers, etc. An advanced version of the CRM could add such features as user-defined fields for such information as next re-election date. Of course, two of the problems with additional data in a CRM database is maintaining the data and protection of personal information.

Transition from Dropbox to Streamline Portal

I doubt NAEFO will be able to maintain most of its historical files on the Streamline Portal because the Streamline Portal does not have a sophisticated document or file management system. The Streamline Portal for NAEFO currently has 51 files; however, there is very little way to organize those files for efficient access, so for instance, if I want to find a specific file, I generally must scroll through all 51 files until I find the file I want. There are no way files can be found on the Portal if the nearly 450 remaining files on NAEFO's DropBox folder are uploaded to the Portal.

I am meeting next week with Streamline to better understand Portal so that NAEFO can maximize Portal as much as possible and to provide feedback to Streamline on how it can improve Portal so that someday NAEFO can discontinue using DropBox.

NAEFO and Streamline Joint Marketing

NAEFO and Streamline have met to begin developing marketing efforts based on the joint "partner agency" agreement signed last year. Streamline will provide a speaker at NAEFO's conference to present on the use of social media and Streamline will promote the presentation to its customers and introduce its customers to NAEFO as part of that presentation. NAEFO will of course promote the conference and its speakers and feature Streamline in at least one of the conference promotions.

Streamline is also willing to try a small-scale test of having Missouri-specific website templates. These templates will be based on the initial website I built for the Tightwad Fire Protection District in about 2 hours. The intent will be for a Missouri fire protection district to build its website on the Streamline platform in about an hour.

If the small-scale test of the website templates works in Missouri, then perhaps state-specific templates can be created for additional states.

The proposal so far would be for Streamline to jointly market the website templates giving and perhaps even having a link to NAEFO preloaded in one of the website templates.

Social Media

The NAEFO Facebook page now has 250 people that are following the page or have liked the page—nearly a 25% increase in the last three months. *If you are on Facebook, please continue to invite every existing and every new Facebook friend in emergency services to like and follow the NAEFO Facebook page. Let's have another 250 followers by the annual conference!*

Webinars

The joint webinars on the *American Rescue Plan Act of 2021* with the National Special Districts Coalition (NSDC) and the Texas State Association of Fire and Emergency Districts were successful. In fact, the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) is considering hosting a joint webinar with NSDC and NEFO for NVFC members.

2021-2022 State Conferences

As the COVID-19 pandemic subsides, in-person conferences are happening again and NAEFO needs to be prepared to have a presence at some of these conferences—especially conferences of the eight of the nine strategic state associations who are critical to NAEFO’s ability to continue to grow, i.e., Arizona; California; Colorado; Florida; Idaho; Illinois; New Jersey; and Utah. I have attached an updated version of the listing of upcoming conferences.

I was well received at the conference and expo of the [Association of Fire Districts of the State of New York](#). Initially there were no more exhibitor booths available due to social distancing; however, a last-minute cancellation by an exhibitor gave the state’s Executive Director an opportunity to allow NAEFO to use the space for only the cost of renting the table, which was under \$130 (normally an exhibitor space goes for nearly \$2,000).

I handed out all 200 of the tri-fold brochures and could have only handed out another half-dozen, but in those last half-dozen instances, I handed out my business card. So far, we have received one new membership request, and several follow up emails regarding the COVID-19 webinar.

There were three lessons learned at the conference: 1) make the website URL more prominent on the brochures; 2) pens went like hotcakes; and 3) we need a way to capture contact information, e.g., emails, for future sharing and marketing with officials (maybe a small give away?).

I also attended the University of Missouri’s Summer Fire School and Expo in which NAEFO shared a complimentary exhibitor booth with the Missouri Association of Fire Protection Districts. I handed out about 100 of the tri-fold brochures to directors of Missouri fire protection districts.

The Florida conference I think remains out of reach; however, NAEFO can still sponsor a hole on the golf tournament, and I have now been told that I or someone from NAEFO can stand at the tee and handout literature (I am still working on getting permission to set up our floor-based display banners).

Conference Display Banners

The conference display banners worked out very well and transported well in a large cardboard box supplied by FedEx. I regret that there was not more lead time to incorporate all the feedback into the final printing on the banners. One of the most troubling discussions that took place after the banners were printed was the debate over when NAEFO started.

Perhaps Bob can set the record straight, but the Oregon Secretary of States shows NAEFO was legally incorporated in 2009, although I suspect NAEFO existed without being incorporated for several years before 2009. I have also sent a message to NAEFO’s first Executive Director, Burton Weast, in hopes that he can also shed light on just exactly what year NAEFO was formed.

The nice thing about the display banners that were printed with 2009, is that at some point we will want to reprint the banners and then if the 2009 needs corrected, we can do that then. In the meantime, the banners look great and the 2009 can be a talking point of “that’s when we became official!”.

One last comment, the trip to New York was tough on the FedEx box, with five legs to the round trip by air. One the fourth leg of the trip, I was surprised to be told at the airline ticket counter that the airlines only cover the cost of the lost box and its contents, not damage to the box or its contents. If NAEFO wants the box and its contents covered for damages, then the box would need to be shipped commercially, that is air freight, UPS, or FedEx, or the box needs to be replaced by a rigid container.

Perhaps the rest of the \$1,000 authorized for the banners should be invested in a banner stand hard carrying case that cost starting at around \$100. Here is a picture of one temporarily marked down to \$83.20 without taxes and shipping (click [here](#) to view the pictured case):



NAEFO Conference

The last two speakers will be Maria Lara from Streamline who will present on the use of social media and Crosby Grindle, who I met at the New York conference, will speak on the use of group purchasing. Crosby works for [Sourcewell](#), a Minnesota governmental agency that since late 2019 is slowly replacing the International Association of Fire Chief’s [FireRescue GPO](#) program (as each [FireRescue GPO](#) bid expires, the replacement bid will be through [Sourcewell](#)).

[Sourcewell](#) provides cooperative purchasing solutions to over 50,000 public-agency members across the United States and Canada with over 400 competitively awarded contracts industry-leading equipment, supplies, and services vendors.

By the way, Burton only lives an hour’s drive northeast of Las Vegas in Mesquite, Nevada—maybe we could get him to stop by the conference for a brief greeting (and maybe the first honorary membership?).

At Large Board Members

I have two thoughts on the number of At Large Board Members.

1. With the new member from New York, maybe we talk to him about becoming an At Large Board Member east of the Mississippi? We could still have another At Large Board Member from west of the Mississippi.
2. At one time Candy indicated that she was considering retirement from her full-time employer in early 2022. That could mean more time that Candy could spend on NAEFO, but that could be very presumptuous after she retires—she may want to spend more time on anything but something that looks and feels like work!

If Candy chooses not to run again for President, they Bylaws guarantees her a seat on the Board as immediate Past President; however, that will also mean that we would lose Bob and I personally have appreciated Bob's knowledge and insights to this organization he helped lead for several years as President. Perhaps there would be an At Large Board member seat that Bob would accept if the members voted accordingly (and I think they would)? Perhaps we should have West Coast, East Coast, and Middle America At Large Board members?

Recording Video Conferences of Board Meetings

We have been recording most of the video conferences of Board meetings since we started conducting the meetings via Zoom. And in the name of transparency to our members I personally think that is a good idea.

However, having rewatched the March meeting, I realized that many of us, including me, said things during that meeting that am pretty sure we would prefer to have "sound bites" spread across the internet. Together we need to make sure we chose our words carefully during future meetings or perhaps we may need to re-evaluate posting the videos to the public (we could still record the meetings, but just use them for archival purposes and we could still share them with members upon request).

Strategic Partnerships, Sponsorships, and Strategic Alliances

I have had preliminary in-person, telephone, and video conference conversations with several vendors and organizations of that could provide a variety of benefits to NAEFO and its members. Several of these organizations were the result of being at the conference and expo in New York.

Because of the previous topic regarding publicly posted video recordings of the meeting and of this report, I am not sure it would be prudent to list names of organizations with whom I have spoken with regarding partnerships, sponsorships, and close working relationships. Obviously as the conversations mature, it will be necessary to be more public about the partnerships, sponsorships, and strategic alliances so that the Board can discuss the possibilities in more details.

2021-2022 State Association Conferences

Dates	State	Comments	Potential Travel \$
4/13-14/21	California	Virtual; no response	None
5/5-8/21	New York	Complimentary registration Exhibitor booth provided for cost of renting the table	\$ 280 Airfare \$ 585 Lodging <u>\$ 350 Car rental</u> \$1,215 Total
6/16-17/21	Florida	Registration closed due to social distancing maximum Sponsor: \$1,000-\$1,250 Exhibitor table: \$1,750 Golf Tournament Sponsor \$1,000 Beverage Cart Sponsor \$1,500 Hole Sponsor \$125/hole	\$300 Airfare \$335 Lodging <u>\$110 Car rental</u> \$745 Total
6/24-26/21	Illinois	Complimentary registration 30-minute spot to speak	\$180 Lodging for 1 night <u>\$ 60 Car rental/mileage</u> \$240 Total
6/25-26/21	Missouri	Conference is not yet finalized	Monte already attending
9/14-16/21	Colorado	Speaker ideas submitted	
9/16-18/21	Texas	Fort Worth	Cliff will be attending
10/1-3/21	Montana	Butte	Bruce already attending
10/20-23/21	Washington	Tulalip	Gerry already attending?
11/3-5/21	Utah	Provo	Monte not far from SLC
11/4-6/21	Oregon	Ashland	Dave already attending
01/2022	Arizona	Speaker topics presented (see NAEFO.org)	
03/24-26/22	Idaho	Boise	Easy flight for Monte
04/2022	California	Unknown; usually Lake Tahoe	
Unknown	New Jersey	Need to leverage webinar presenter Scott Eskwitt to better understand the NJ association	Monte frequently in NYC area for family

Conference Displays purchased

Qty	Details	Each	Cost
1	Wall/table banner, 5' W x 3' T	\$126	\$126
2	Tabletop display, 11" W x 17" T	\$ 20	\$ 40
2	Retractable Floor display stand 32" W x 80" T	\$280	\$560
3	Design hours	\$ 25	\$ 75
Total without taxes			\$801