

# THE COUNCIL CONNECTION

Official Publication of the  
Washington State Council of Fire  
Fighters

*Published monthly by the WSCFF &  
provided to WSCFF Members*



**Washington State  
Council of Fire Fighters**

*"We continue to have  
clear direction - to serve  
our members. We don't  
move away from  
challenges, we embrace  
them. Obstacles we face  
are an opportunity to get  
better."*

*Dennis Lawson  
WSCFF President*

## Message from WSCFF President Dennis Lawson

Dear Members,

As we head into 2019, I want to take a moment and personally thank you for your support and willingness to stay union. This has been an interesting year, and yet our membership remains strong and engaged in our profession and our great union.

I ask you to take some time to reflect on last year and remember those who have passed. We truly have much to be grateful for and coming out of the holiday season is an opportune time to acknowledge this.

It is an honor to have the opportunity to serve our organization and to carry on the tradition of the WSCFF.

On behalf of your WSCFF Executive Board, Trustees, Legislative Team and Staff we wish you a very Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Dennis Lawson

WSCFF President



WSCFF President Dennis Lawson has worked in the fire service since 1987 and serves as a Battalion Chief with Local 726, Pierce County Professional Fire Fighters. He has served continuously on the Executive Board for Local 726 holding all elected positions, and now represents the Chief Bargaining unit for Central Pierce Fire and Rescue.

Dennis was elected WSCFF Trustee in 1994 and subsequently elected 4th District Representative and Vice President. He became WSCFF President in 2016. He enjoys sharing his knowledge and experiences because no matter the outcome, he believes the education of our future leaders and membership is vital to our continued success as a union and a profession.

Dennis has been married to his lovely wife Brenda for 32 years. When he is not working, his greatest joy is spending time with his two grandchildren. He also enjoys traveling, boating, golfing, working outside and hanging out with his two dogs.

Dennis is proud to share the legacy of fire fighting with his family. His father, Dick Lawson, worked for Local 31, Tacoma Fire Fighters, and his brother, Dan Lawson, currently works for Local 452, Vancouver.

## Message from WSCFF Secretary-Treasurer Greg Markley

Happy New Year everyone. I hope 2019 is a healthy and prosperous year for you and your families. Your WSCFF executive board and staff are committed to providing you our very best efforts and service.

With the 2019 Legislative Session beginning on January 14. The WSCFF legislative team is refining our messaging for our issues, which include; privacy protections for post- traumatic stress injuries through L & I; funding for the Benefit Improvement Account; and expanding our presumptive coverage to include several additional cancers. We have done our homework, and initial conversations about our issues with legislators have gone well. This year is a long session in Olympia, which gives us more time to work our bills through the legislature.

We continue to expand our membership in the Northwest Firefighter Trust with nearly 3,000 members and 37 locals participating across seven states. Our disability plan trended well last year with no premium increase for 2019.

We are seeing a greater interest in our Firefighter Special License Plate program and I encourage you all to get a specialty plate. For every plate issued or renewed, the WSCFF Benevolent Fund receives \$28.

The current 2019 Benevolent Fund Scholarship application period is open through March 15, and all graduating high school students who are dependents of our members are eligible if they are attending a 2-year or 4-year college or vocational program. Visit [wscff.org](http://wscff.org) for more information.

I would just like to thank for your support of the WSCFF. The WSCFF is recognized across this country as one of the most progressive statewide firefighter labor organizations. We have created programs like our post-retirement Medical Expense Reimbursement Plan (MERP) that exists nowhere else in the country. Our Personal Injury Illness Exposure Reporting System (PIIERS) has received national attention as a premiere plan for our members at no cost.

As we look to the future, we will continue to explore other opportunities to benefit all of us during our careers and retirements. Rest assured that we are here for you and your local when you need us.

Fraternally,

Greg Markley

Secretary/Treasurer



Greg Markley has served as the Secretary/Treasurer of the Washington State Council of Fire Fighters since 2003 after starting on the board as a District Representative in 1997. Greg continues to assist local unions with all issues related to running a successful union. He currently chairs the Post-Retirement Medical Expense Reimbursement Plan (MERP), serving more than 7,000 professional firefighters and paramedics across four states with more than \$120 million in assets. Greg also chairs the WSCFF Northwest Fire Fighter Benefits Trust (NWFFT) with over 2,500 members and their families across six states.

Since 2002, Greg has served as a Battalion Chief for the Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority providing services to the cities of Covington, Kent, Maple Valley and SeaTac where he oversees Governmental Relations, Accreditation and Grant Programs. In addition, he is the Treasurer of the Bates Technical College Foundation and has volunteered for the Muscular Dystrophy Association through Local 1747, Kent Fire Fighters, for over three decades.

## LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

On January 1, 2019, Central Valley Ambulance Authority (CVAA), the paramedic service covering a majority of Skagit County, was permanently closed. CVAA, which employed 37 IAFF members of Local 3427 Skagit County Paramedics, ceased to exist. Skagit County commissioners had voted in July to dissolve the current system and transition to a fire-based delivery model utilizing the cities of Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon and Sedro Woolley. As soon as the decision to cease CVAA operations was announced, IAFF and WSCFF leadership met with the affiliate leaders and devised a plan that gave the members of Local 3427 the best possibility of being re-employed within the county. This plan followed core union principals of seniority maintenance, no probation, and limited physical agility requirements, acknowledging these were proven seasoned veterans of the industry.

In the intervening months, leadership from Local 3427, IAFF 7th District VP Ricky Walsh, WSCFF President Dennis Lawson, and WSCFF Vice President and 10th District Representative Dean Shelton utilized political relationships, education and skills acquired from WSCFF and IAFF educational events to ensure that the Local 3427 members were employed with the various agencies/IAFF affiliates that divided the funding to continue providing paramedic services in Skagit County via the new fire-based model. Thirty-five of the thirty-seven members are now working in the various fire departments and two decided to make other plans.

This is a shining example of members of your 7th District Leadership Team working collectively to represent our local affiliates in the face of adversity.

“Collective efforts produce the best outcomes,” stated IAFF DVP Walsh.



## 2019 FIRE OPS REGISTRATION



**Washington State**  
Council of Fire Fighters

It's time again for FIRE OPS. The event will be held March 21 & 22, 2019, at the Volpentest Hammer Training and Education Center in Richland, Washington.

Attendance is limited to one elected official or media person per local, and a local member must accompany ('shadow') each attendee.

There are limited spaces available; so if you want to register someone, please contact Debbie Guillot at the WSCFF office to get on the list. Once you are on the list, you will receive a registration form that is due upon receipt along with the \$350, non-refundable fee.

There is a block of rooms reserved at the Red Lion Hotel – Richland Hanford House for the night of March 21.

To register or if you have any questions, please call Debbie at 800-572-5762 or email her at [debbie@wscff.org](mailto:debbie@wscff.org).

# FROM RESOLUTION TO RCW- YOUR WSCFF TEAM IS READY TO ROLL

## WSCFF LEGISLATIVE LIAISONS



## MEET YOUR TEAM

Building on the success of last year's legislative session, the WSCFF has been preparing for the 2019 regular session that convenes January 14. In addition to President Dennis Lawson, Secretary-Treasurer Greg Markley, and Vice President Dean Shelton, your legislative team includes Legislative Liaisons AJ Johnson and Bud Sizemore, and Session Lobbyist Nich Gullickson.

This year's legislative priorities include expanding presumptive disease coverage; refining the landmark PTSD legislation passed last year; funding Law Enforcement Officers and Fire Firefighters Plan 2 Retirement (LEOFF) and local government funding improvements.

AJ Johnson, L1828, served as the WSCFF's first session lobbyist in 2018 and now works as a legislative liaison. He began his professional firefighting career in 2007 with the Stanwood Fire Department and was hired by Snohomish County Fire District 1 in 2014. Johnson has served in local leadership and completed the IAFF Political Training Academy (PTA).

We welcome back Bud Sizemore, retired L1747, who served as WSCFF Legislative Liaison from 2003-2012. Sizemore retired from Puget Sound Fire in June, and lobbied for the Washington Council of Police and Sheriffs for the last several years. He's a graduate of the IAFF PTA.

The newest member of the team, and a recent graduate of the IAFF PTA, Nich Gullickson, L2024, has experience with political action working for his local and assisting IAFF locals around the state. He joined the South King County Professional Fire Fighters in 2015.



# 2019 WSCFF Legislative Conference

*January 29 & 30, 2019*

*9:00 a.m.*

*Hotel RL Olympia*

*Registrations and  
payment due Friday,*

*January 18, 2019.*

*Registration begins at*

*7:00 a.m.*

*January 29, 2019.*

## 2019 WSCFF KELLY L. FOX LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

**\*\*PLEASE NOTE: TRYING SOMETHING NEW!!!!**

Lobbying appointments can be set for both the afternoon of January 29 and the morning of January 30. The idea is to allow everyone to attend the briefing, provide flexibility in scheduling appointments, and make better use of your time and energy. Your district representative will still make your appointments

Registrations and payment are due **Friday, January 18, 2019**. Your local may send as many participants as you deem necessary. There is a \$50.00 fee per person. *Per Resolution 06-08, registrations received after January 18, 2019, will cost \$75.* Please make your room reservations directly with the Hotel RL before **January 18, 2019.**

Registration will begin at 7:00 a.m. on January 29, 2019. The conference will start at 9:00 a.m. with a review of our legislative agenda. Your district representative will make your appointments with your legislators and notify you of your meeting schedule. Between 8:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., the WSCFF will provide buses to shuttle you between the Hotel RL and the Capitol for your meetings. There will be no buses provided on January 30, 2019.

A WSCFF Legislative Briefing Book will be provided in your registration packets. A copy of the book will be sent to each legislator prior to January 29, 2019.

A buffet-style dinner will be available to fire fighters at 5:30 p.m. The legislative reception will follow at 6:30 p.m. At this function, please seek out your legislators for follow-up discussions.

The Hospitality Room will be open the nights of January 28 and 29. Please make responsible travel plans.



Local 1433 Pasco on Capitol Steps  
2018 Legislative Conference



2005 Archived photo of Governor Christine Gregoire signing HB 1269, allowing LEOFF Plan 2 members to purchase service credit at the time of retirement.

# WSCFF SMALL LOCAL SUBSIDY POLICY

## PROCEDURES

To be eligible, a local must meet the following criteria:

- Have 20 or fewer members
- Have a dues structure of at least 1.5% of its top firefighter pay or 1% of top firefighter pay plus per capita for the WSCFF, IAFF and WSLC.

Locals will be reimbursed for lodging and taxes while attending the WSCFF events listed. One, two-bed room will be reimbursed, unless attendees are of opposite genders. Room charges (such as parking, movies, internet, and restaurant charges) will be the responsibility of the local.

Locals will be reimbursed for travel to and from an event. The amount of the reimbursement will be based on the current IRS mileage rate. Mileage will be reimbursed per driving mile for one vehicle. Members may choose to fly, take a bus or train. The reimbursement amount will be limited to the lesser cost of the ticket or the applicable round-trip mileage allowance.

Locals must request participation in the Small Local Subsidy Program annually and prior to the event by sending a letter verifying they meet the requirements to do so. Locals must submit requests for reimbursement to the WSCFF by August 31 of the year the event took place.

## POLICY

The small local subsidy program exists to assist locals in participating in the WSCFF Legislative Conference and the Educational Seminar.

Please contact [helen@wscff.org](mailto:helen@wscff.org)

## FIRST RESPONDERS SAVE ROWER FROM 'WIDOWMAKER' HEART ATTACK

Charles Hamlin, a 1968 Olympic rower, was training on Lake Whatcom last June, when he collapsed. Thanks to the efforts of **Antonio Robinson, a firefighter and EMT with Local 1828, South County Union Fire Fighters**, he survived a type of heart attack that often turns deadly.

Hamlin was sitting in the "three-seat" on the maiden voyage of his new racing boat when crew members noticed he leaned back and appeared to be having a seizure.



Robinson, who happened to be nearby, swam to Hamlin's boat and pulled him into a chase craft. There, he performed a marathon of chest compressions – more than 17 minutes before they reached first responders on shore.

Hamlin was rushed to the hospital and walked out days later, with no permanent heart damage.

The cardiac arrest didn't slow Hamlin down. He recently returned from Florida winning five rowing events in the Master's Division.

*Pictured are Charles Hamlin thanking Antonio Robinson and other first responders for their quick work. He awarded four of the five gold medals he won in Florida to the responders who saved his life.*



**If you have any questions or would like these forms in Word or Excel, please contact Helen Kramer at the WSCFF office:  
helen@wscff.org or 800-572-5762**



## **2019 WSCFF BENEVOLENT FUND SCHOLARSHIP**

The 2019 WSCFF Benevolent Fund Scholarship Program application is available! The application period closes March 15, 2019.

Complete applications packets must be postmarked or delivered to the WSCFF office by March 15, 2019. To apply, complete the 2019 application and activities worksheet; sign the scholarship policy; attach your essay, transcripts, proof of acceptance to a university, community college or trade school; a letter confirming your parent/guardian's WSCFF affiliation; and two letters of recommendation.

## **WASHINGTON STATE LABOR COUNCIL ELECTS NEW OFFICERS**

Widely considered to be the "voice of labor" in Washington state, the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) has more than 600 affiliated local unions and organizations, representing some 450,000 rank-and-file union members, making it the largest union organization in Washington.

Jeff Johnson, who was awarded the WSCFF Walt Lambert Labor Leader Award at last year's Convention in Kennewick, retired in 2018 after serving eight years as WSLC President. The WSCFF welcomes newly-elected President Larry Brown of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO, and April Sims as Secretary-Treasurer, who started their terms on January 5, 2019.

**Governor Jay Inslee welcomed the new WSLC officers and issued this statement:**

"I offer my congratulations to Larry who is known to Washingtonians for his work on behalf of Boeing machinists and as a strong leader in our state's community college system. I congratulate April on her new role and know that she has spent her career in the labor movement as an advocate for workers. These leaders have already demonstrated their strong commitment to workers, social justice and shared economic growth. I look forward to working with both of them and their members to continue to strengthen, grow and develop Washington as a place that works for everyone."

**IAFF Legal Education Series**  
**by Schwerin Campbell Barnard Iglitzin & Lavitt LLP**  
**18 West Mercer St. Suite 400**  
**Seattle (206) 285-2828**

**WASHINGTON STATE LEAVE LAW UPDATE**  
**PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE**

Beginning on January 1, 2020, Washington will join a handful of states that provide paid family and medical leave benefits to workers.

**What does the new law do?**

It creates a mandatory, statewide paid family and medical leave insurance system administered by the Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD).

**Tell me about the premiums.**

In 2019, the premium for each pay period will be .4% of gross pay shared by the employer, who pays 37% and the employee, who pays 63%. The employer can choose to pay some or all the employee's share of the premium.

**What can I use the benefits for?**

Starting on January 2, 2020, a worker who has worked at least 820 hours in the first four of the last five completed calendar quarters and meets certain claim, disclosure and notice requirements can take paid leave for any of the following reasons:

- Birth or placement of child younger than 18
- Care of a family member experiencing a serious health condition
- Military exigency
- To care for your own serious health condition
- Note: the 820 hours can be earned at more than one employer

**Tell me about the benefits.**

- The State pays a percentage of your average weekly pay up to 90% of your weekly wage, after a seven-day waiting period. Benefits can be no less than \$100 per week and no more than \$1,000 per week.
- The law generally allows up to 12 weeks of paid leave, but additional leave is available in certain circumstances.
- Benefits are fully portable between jobs, including periods between jobs, including periods between jobs.
- If your employer uses a Voluntary Plan instead of the state plan, your benefits may be different, but they must meet or exceed the state plan.

**What other protections are in the law?**

If your employer has 50 or more employees and you meet other requirements, the law protects your right to return to the same or an equivalent job. It is illegal for your employer to retaliate against you for exercising your rights under the law.

If you have questions, see:

<https://paidleave.wa.gov/>



# PAID SICK LEAVE

Effective January 1, 2018, all employers covered by the Washington state Minimum Wage Act, including local governments and fire districts, must provide employees paid sick leave.

## What does the new law do?

- Employees must accrue at least one hour of paid sick leave for every 40 hours worked.
- Employers must carry over up to 40 hours of accrued, unused sick leave to the next year.
- Employees must be paid sick leave benefits at their normal hourly rate of pay (which means the rate the employee would have earned for those particular hours).
- New employees begin to accrue paid sick leave immediately but the right to use leave begins after 90 days of employment. Employees cannot be disciplined or retaliated against for using paid sick leave.

## What can I use sick leave for?

- Your own or your family member's:
- Mental or physical illness, injury, or health condition
- Need for medical diagnosis, care or treatment
- Need for preventative medical care
- Workplace or children's school closure for health-related reason
- Domestic violence absences

## Is there any cost to employees? No.

Unlike the paid family and medical leave law, employees are not responsible for paying any part of the cost of the paid sick leave benefit.

## Are there any provisions that must be included in a CBA?

Yes, if the employer provides the following:

- **Verification Requirements**
- **Frontloading:** (allowing use of leave before it accrues).
- **Accrual years other than January 1 to December 31**
- **Shared Leave Programs**
- **Cash-outs:** The law does not require the employer to cash out unused, accrued leave at the end of employment, but if it does, rules around that must be in the CBA.
- **Note:** the law sets a floor, not a ceiling. Unions and employers can bargain better paid sick leave benefits, but not worse.

## Does our CBA's universal PTO program satisfy the paid sick leave requirements? Maybe.

In general, universal PTO programs satisfy the paid leave requirements so long as it meets the accrual, pay rate, carry over, and use requirements described above.

If you have questions, see:

<https://www.lni.wa.gov/WorkplaceRights/LeaveBenefits/VacaySick/PaidSickLeave.asp>

*Schwerin Campbell Barnard Iglitzin & Lavitt LLP is the Pacific Northwest's largest union-side labor and employment law firm. Our roots and commitment to serving working people date back to the region's labor struggles of the early 1900's. From our Seattle base, we represent over 50 public and private sector unions across the nation. Innovative tactics, aggressive defense and strategic organizing lie at the heart of a practice founded on decades of experience. To learn more, please visit:*

**[www.workerlaw.com](http://www.workerlaw.com)**

# WSCFF HISTORY

The Washington State Council of Fire Fighters (WSCFF) was founded on September 1, 1939, and represents 129 affiliated local fire fighter unions and more than 8,600 affiliated members of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) within the state.

The WSCFF's mission is to provide the best possible working conditions, the safest work environment, and the fairest wages and benefits to fulfill the needs of the men and women in this profession. The council is active on local and national fronts with regard to issues that affect its members.

The WSCFF administers several major programs in addition to political action. Education is provided through regional classes and one comprehensive Educational Seminar per year. An annual Convention is held to elect officers and determine policy and direction of the WSCFF. Legal assistance is provided through direct response financial loans or retention of counsel. Representation is provided when needed and requested for contract negotiations, mediation, interest arbitration, grievance arbitration, and other matters.

The WSCFF's Executive Board is made up of its executive officers and an elected representative from 11 geographic regions (WSCFF districts across the state). Since WSCFF and legislative districts are not the same, there is some overlap whereby WSCFF board members represent multiple legislative districts. The WSCFF is affiliated with the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) and Canadian Labor Congress (CLC).

## WSCFF EXECUTIVE BOARD

### OFFICERS

**Dennis Lawson**  
President

**Greg Markley**  
Secretary/Treasurer

**DEAN SHELTON**  
Vice President & Tenth District Rep.

### DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES

**Mike Bacon**  
First District

**Jeff Wainwright**  
Second District

**Tim Hoover**  
Third District

**Mike Westland**  
Fourth District

**Ryan Reese**  
Fifth District

**Ryan Mudie**  
Sixth District

**Craig Soucy**  
Seventh District

**Bill Mack**  
Eighth District

**Keven Rojecki**  
Ninth District

**Theresa Purtell**  
Eleventh District

Trustees  
**Rich Kittinger**  
**Tom Reich**  
**John Gallup**

Legislative Liaisons  
**AJ Johnson**  
**Bud Sizemore**

Session Lobbyist  
**Nich Gullickson**

Executive Assistant  
**Helen Kramer**

Administrative Assistants  
**Debbie Guillot**  
**Laura Holder**

## Upcoming Events

**WSCFF 2019 Legislative Conference**  
**January 29-30, 2019**  
**Hotel RL**

**IAFF Fire Ops 101 2019 Legislative Conference**  
**March 21-22, 2019**  
**Volpentest Hammer Training**  
**Richland, Wa**

TUES  
WED

29-30

THURS  
FRI

21-22

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Olympia, Wa 98501  
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wscff.org  
laura@wscff.org



**DID YOU  
KNOW?** The  
WSCFF office in  
Olympia has  
meeting space  
available to  
Local affiliates  
for meetings and  
retreats.  
Contact the  
office  
wscff@wscff.org