



November 15, 2005

Dear PFFA Leaders and Members,

Recently, there has been extensive debate, posturing and speculation related to how emergency medical transportation services will be provided in the Valley and statewide. Unfortunately, this issue has become fuel for local media stories and cyberspace rumors and both have proven unproductive and divisive.

It is time to provide some clarity and move forward.

I was elected President of the P.F.F.A. in May, 2003. It was my position at that time, as it is now, that our International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Local 160, United Emergency Medical Professionals, should aggressively organize other ambulance companies in the Valley and, potentially, statewide. This was long before the recent purchase of Professional Medical Transport (PMT) by Bob Ramsey and his partners. The leadership of I60 at that time did not agree with my vision to organize other companies in the Valley but did extend their membership into Pima County. This in itself was a difficult decision and needed to be "approved" by other IAFF locals in southern Arizona. Eventually, I60 organized its Southwest members in Pima County. Southwest Ambulance, to some degree, began to replace Pima County Rural Metro employees in some areas with Southwest employees who are IAFF members of Local I60.

On February 2, 2005, the CEO of 911 Emergency Services for PMT (Pat Cantelme) met with me and expressed his company's willingness to voluntarily recognize an IAFF local in his company to represent his employees, if they so chose. He committed to recognizing a contract equal to or better than the current I60 contract that covers Southwest Ambulance employees. Mr. Cantelme was advised that this recognition would have to include ALL employees of his company, not just the emergency services side and he agreed. He was also advised of the IAFF Constitutional provision related to work jurisdiction in the emergency transportation industry.

I facilitated a meeting between Mr. Cantelme and the leadership of Local I60 shortly thereafter. Mr. Cantelme, again, supported recognizing an IAFF local in his company and committed to honoring the I60 contract. He also indicated his company's ambition to bid for and possibly win contracts in many east valley cities including Scottsdale, Chandler and Tempe. In May, President P.J. Elias of I60 rejected his offer to organize PMT. On May 19th they declared his company a hostile/rival organization to the IAFF due to, in large part, PMT's ambition to bid for and win contracts in those cities.

At the PFFA convention in Prescott in May 2005, a meeting was held with IAFF General President Harold Schaitberger, IAFF 10th District Vice President James Ferguson, President Elias, and Presidents of IAFF Locals with a stake in Arizona's emergency transportation issues. I was also in attendance. At that meeting GP Schaitberger informed all of the parties that it was his desire to organize all EMS workers in Arizona under one local union and he encouraged I60 to do so. He also suggested that if I60 did not want to organize other companies he would be willing to approve a charter for a new IAFF local to represent the other workers.

As most of you know, The City of Scottsdale started its own Municipal Fire Department in July, 2005. Prior to that time the Rural Metro Corporation provided both the fire and emergency transportation services in the City. Local 3878, United Maricopa County Fire Fighters Assn., represented/s all of those members and is entitled to retain that work jurisdiction. On September 9, 2005, PMT was recommended by the City of Scottsdale selection panel to provide emergency transportation services in Scottsdale. Shortly thereafter, the Scottsdale City Council awarded the emergency transportation contract to PMT. Included in that contract is a requirement that PMT deploy four (4) rescues that are fire department members who are integrated into the fire department response system. The other units are staffed with private sector, civilian, employees.

On September 13, 2005, Mr. Cantelme formally requested that the IAFF/PFFA consider organizing his company and his desire that I60 represent his employees.

On September 23, 2005, the IAFF Executive Board denied the I60 request to declare Professional Medical Transport and other Ramsey ambulance companies as rival organizations.

These meetings and discussions were positive and productive. Unfortunately, the media stories and spin were not. Worse, a cyberspace "campaign" and extensive blogs about our business seemed to be designed to attack and damage individuals on both sides of this issue and our Locals. This negative commentary is destructive and divisive and must stop.

On Monday, November 7, 2005, IAFF General President Harold Schaitberger flew to Phoenix to have direct meetings with the parties involved. An action plan has been developed for organizing private EMS workers in Arizona regardless of their company affiliation and he committed to support and defend the IAFF Constitution and Bylaws regarding supporting established work jurisdictions in the State. He advised IAFF fire unions that Local I60 has the emergency transportation work jurisdiction in most Valley cities and they must honor that jurisdiction and vice versa.

There is much work to be done to carry out this plan. The leaders of the PFFA and our Locals have committed their efforts and resources to the implementation of the plan. We ask that you ignore the half-truths in the media and the rumor-mongering we've seen online. We will keep you accurately informed in a timely manner.

We now have a plan in place that will help strengthen every IAFF Local in Arizona and increase our membership and leverage. Let's give the plan a chance to work.

These have been contentious and sometimes heated times. That debate is now behind us. It's time for all our members to concentrate on providing the best service they can to the communities where they live and work and our Local leaders to concentrate on the real issues of improving wages, hours, working conditions and pension benefits for current and retired members.

Thank you for your support.

Faternally,

Brian P. Tobin

Brian P. Tobin
President