**Report on 89th Meeting of the West Virginia Firemen’s Convention at McMechen, West Virginia on August 24, 2017 by DVFA 2nd VP Bill Betts**

President Ted Walius and 2nd VP traveled to Moundsville, WV to attend the West Virginia Firemen’s Convention in Moundsville, WV on August 23, 2017, to attend their meeting on August 24, 2017. Moundsville is located in the panhandle of WV approximately 10 miles south of Wheeling. The meeting was held in an old Penitentiary in Moundsville. After arriving on Wednesday afternoon, we traveled north to McMechen to register at their fire station, and due to flooding of their station in July, we were invited to a welcome celebration at the Riverfront park that evening.

On Thursday morning, they had their opening ceremony and business session. Out of State coordinator Steve Austin was also there, and President Walius gave greetings from Delaware when we were introduced. It was surprising to learn of the poor attendance at the Conference as West Virginia has 55 Counties and 413 Fire Departments, and there were only 34 companies in attendance with 83 delegates, 3 alternates, and 11 guests. We sat with the Maryland delegation of 1st VP Rick Blair, and PP Bob Cumberland, who is also their out of state coordinator.

The discussion at the conference was centered on problems similar to Delaware with Funding, Recruitment & Retention, and how to attract the millennials to join the departments. They were going to attempt to spend money on Google to put them higher on the search list, when people would search for Fire Departments, and especially West Virginia Fire Departments. I also picked up their 3 page of legislative bills that were submitted, and I will turn them over to our legislative committee to see if we can benefit from any of the bills in their legislature.

The meeting lasted all day with a break for a buffet lunch that we were charged $5.00 for. That evening, we attended a BBQ at the Clear Vue Park, and they had a Fire Chief from Benwood that was honored for in 50 years as Fire Chief. There were several dignitaries there from the WV Legislature, and a Fox news cameraman. Ted and I were both on the news at 10 pm that evening after the event.

On Friday morning, we got up and drove back to Delaware for the 7-hour drive.