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**Congressional Fire Services Institute To Host 32nd Annual National Fire and Emergency Services Symposium and Dinner**

After canceling the two previously scheduled National Fire and Emergency Services Symposium and Dinner programs due to COVID-19, the Congressional Fire Services Institute (CFSI) looks forward to hosting the 32nd Annual National Fire and Emergency Services Symposium and Dinner program on April 6 -7, 2022. We certainly hope that members of the Delaware Volunteer Firefighters Association will be willing to renew their support of CFSI by attending the event.

**OUR WORK ON CAPITOL HILL:**Since we last assembled in the Washington Hilton International Ballroom, CFSI has been actively engaged in communicating to Congress the needs of the fire and emergency services throughout the pandemic. In 2020, Congress addressed many legislative priorities for the fire service due in part to our efforts resulting in:

* $100 million in additional FY2020 AFG funding for COVID-19 specific PPE.
* An increase in FY21 funding for both the AFG and SAFER programs,
* An increase in FY21 funding for the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA),
* An increase in FY21 funding for the Volunteer Fire Assistance program,
* A repeal of the T-Band auction mandate which would have forced many fire departments to surrender their spectrum in T-Band used for their communication systems, and
* Funding for the National Firefighter Registry (NFR) that will collect data on firefighter cancer and other occupational illnesses to help researchers develop prevention programs and potential cures.

In 2021, we continued our active role on Capitol Hill, advocating for the fire service and urging Congress to support funding above FY21 levels for the AFG and SAFER program, USFA, and the NFR. With our partners, we requested funding in the President's proposed infrastructure measure for fire station renovations, fire sprinklers, and adoption and use of hazard-resistant codes and standards. Following the tragic residential high-rise fire in New York City, we have been working with other organizations to advocate for the passage of various fire sprinkler legislative initiatives that would provide incentives to retrofit high-rise residential properties and Department of Housing and Urban Development properties with fire sprinklers. CFSI continues to monitor the progress of our legislative efforts and is always prepared to share additional information so that Congress continues to hear our message.

**DETAIL ABOUT THE DINNER AND SEMINAR PROGRAM**

Unlike other conferences or trade shows, our event focuses on federal initiatives and issues we work on with partnering organizations. We schedule the seminars in the morning and early afternoon to allow our participants time in the afternoon to meet with their members of Congress and interact with their peers. Fortunately, both the House and Senate are scheduled to be in session both days, so we hope to see many of our attendees meeting with their federal representatives.

Careful planning went into developing the seminar program, which will cover a broad range of fire service topics. One seminar will address volunteer recruitment and retention and feature DVFA Executive Manager Warren Jones and Cumberland Valley Volunteer Firemen's Association Vice President Candice McDonald among the presenters. Other seminars will cover current issues, including COVID-19, USFA Research, Wildland-Urban Interface, and Line of Duty Death and Injury Prevention.

We have received many questions about the pandemic and its potential impact on our event. CFSI will follow the most current District of Columbia COVID-related requirements for attending indoor events. Requirements issued on January 15th state that all guests must show proof of vaccination before entering meeting spaces, including the International Ballroom and seminar rooms, and wear wristbands verifying their vaccination status. Unvaccinated guests will need to show documentation of medical or religious exemptions from the COVID-19 vaccine and negative PCR or antigen test results within the previous 24 hours. In addition, all attendees must wear masks. CFSI will have a help desk near Will Call for verifying vaccination status and issuing wristbands.

**YOUR SUPPORT**
As I have mentioned before at your conferences and quarterly meetings throughout the years, CFSI is a privately-funded organization. We do not receive federal funding, including AFG funding. While we are eligible to receive them, we believe that fire departments in Delaware and across the nation can best utilize these funds to address their unmet needs. We also support awarding these funds to organizations like DVFA that deliver health and safety programs to the men and women serving in our fire stations.

President John F. Kennedy once said, “As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words but to live by them.” As in previous years, we will offer DVFA members a special discount on their registration fee to show our gratitude for your continued support. And we will also continue our work on Capitol Hill advocating for federal aid to address the needs of your fire departments and fire departments across the nation.

I hope to see you in April and, if not April, then later in the year at your annual conference or other DVFA events.

Stay safe,



Bill Webb
CFSI Executive Director
DVFA Honorary Member