



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

NEWS from Fire Fighters

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Nation's Fire Fighters Congratulate and Welcome Appointment of R. David Paulison as Emergency Management Chief

WASHINGTON, DC – International Association of Fire Fighters General President Harold A. Schaitberger issued this statement today upon the appointment of R. David Paulison as the under secretary for emergency management for the nation:

“Having known and worked with David Paulison for many years, the nation’s fire fighters know today that our country will be better prepared with Paulison in charge of our nation’s emergency management. We applaud President Bush for selecting a seasoned emergency response professional for this important post.

“Paulison has a proven track record and a decorated career in emergency response planning, preparedness, management, emergency medical care, rescue, recovery and emergency incident mitigation – all of the qualifications necessary for the top emergency response position in our country’s government.

“Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma made clear that all of the preparations, coordination and response capabilities that had purportedly been developed and put into place since the tragedy of September 11, 2001, hadn’t, in fact, prepared our government to respond to the needs of its first responders or its citizens effectively in a major disaster.

“Our members – the fire fighters and emergency medical professionals in the affected communities – remained on the frontlines through the storms, performing their jobs under the toughest of circumstances. Yet, these first responders received virtually no assistance from their federal or state government, in some cases for weeks after the storm.

“Now is the time for our federal government to prepare to fully respond to the next disaster that hits our nation. It’s time that preparedness and response be seamlessly integrated under a single agency and that the person in charge of that agency be the lead federal officer in charge of coordinating the federal government’s response to disasters.

“This individual must be given broad authority and have direct access to the president during disasters. We have complete confidence that will excel in his new post and if given the proper authority, David Paulison will do honor to our country the next time disaster strikes our homeland. We call on the Senate to confirm David Paulison.”

****IAFF President Schaitberger is available for interviews****

The International Association of Fire Fighters, headquartered in Washington, DC, represents more than 270,000 full-time professional fire fighters and paramedics who protect 80 percent of the nation’s population. More than 2,500 IAFF members responded throughout the Gulf region to assist those communities and rescue those in need, even as many suffered losses of their own. The IAFF has provided relief in the form of money, food, water, clothing, shelter, rebuilding, medical and psychological assistance. More information is available at www.iaff.org.

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