UNITY

THRU STRENGTH AND PURPOSE

Quarterly Voice of the Retired Detroit Police and Fire Fighters *Volume 163, Fall, 2025*

PRESIDENT

Don Taylor

The holiday season is just around the corner which is a joyful time for us to visit family and friends. But the holiday season also includes return of snow and cold weather. As we get older shoveling and just getting around becomes more difficult. So we look forward to the holidays, but at the same time, we will likely be looking forward to spring. Don't forget about the Associations December General Meeting, on the 4th at the American Polish Century Club 33204 Maple Lane Sterling Heights.

It's been kind of quiet around here. Not much happening on the legislative front, as you know Michigan legislature has split governing power Republicans control the House and Democrats the Senate. Presently there doesn't seem to be much that these two political parties can agree on, and that goes for State and Federal politicians. That can be good, if they can't agree on any changes, they can't screw anything up.

Speaking about changes, there is one group that does continue to agree on things, and that is our VEBA Trustees, that represent those of us that retired prior to January 1, 2015. They continue to do an outstanding job of investing and overseeing the VEBA Funds. Every year they make improvements to our Healthcare Benefits we enjoy, and it looks like that will continue into 2026 and beyond.

Our membership continues to age and shrink in number. I have mentioned this in the past, but it may be time for an update. During the bankruptcy our membership was it its highest point just under 7000, the total membership now stands at 4297. We now have 346 total members or associates 90 years old or older, and 29 are 100 years old or older. Our current oldest member is Reginald LeBlanc Retired Fire Lt, 104 years old, DOB 3/31/1921 lives in Yale, MI. There are three other members that are also 104 years old born later in 1921, Irene Doench 7/10/1921 Po1ice Assoc, Dorothy Neil 9/21/1921 Fire Assoc, and Helen O'Brien 10/13/1921 Fire Assoc. It's great to see so many of our members living longer and hopefully healthy lives.

That's it for now, as I said not much going on, enjoy the upcoming holiday season, and if you can attend the Association events.

This will be the final Unity Newsletter for 2025

From all of us at the RDPFFA Office and Board of Directors:

Best Wishes for a wonderful Thanksgiving and a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

VICE PRESIDENT

Gregory Trozak

I hope everyone is doing well and you enjoyed the summer months with family and friends but fall has arrived so the adjustments will start and the planning for those fall and winter trips to warmer climates are in the planning stages. Our members that are already residing in the warmer areas enjoy and think of the rest of us. It won't be that long before the holidays are upon us.

I will start with some pension updates. The first is the pension system is doing very well with the stock market hitting all-time highs.

Also, the City is making their required contributions quarterly which helps with the cash flow. The City, in its annual budget, included a 10 million dollar distribution for retirees, both General and Police & Fire, which has been approved by City Council. The distribution will be split between both funds. The 5 million for Police and Fire will be distributed in the December 1st pension check. This is the same type of additional distribution that we received in May of this year. The amount will be similar to what you received on that check. The average amount was around $600.00 plus or minus a few dollars. At that time I received a few calls from members concerning the amount of Michigan tax that was deducted from their check. It is unknown if that will happen again from this distribution, so just keep that in mind at tax filing time.

Moving on with the Association news, by the time you read this article the event at Soaring Eagle Resort & Casino will be over. Although the numbers were down some this year, I am sure the members who attended had a great time and hopefully some hit it big.

The next General Meeting will be Thursday December 4th at the east side location, The Polish Century Banquet Center, hope to see many of you there to help kick off the Holiday Season.

The Association again this year will have the Annual Picnic and General Meeting breakfast in Frankenmuth. The picnic will be on Monday June 15, 2026 with the meeting and breakfast on Tuesday the 16th. There will be the normal Hospitality Rooms in the evening on Sunday the 14th and Monday the 15h. The rooms will be the same price as this year @ $139.00 plus tax and resort fee. There will be a lot more information as time moves on and we will keep everyone informed.

This time of year there is not much going on which includes this article so in closing I want to wish everyone a great Holiday Season, enjoy with family and friends and as always please be careful out there, take care of yourself and remember this is a whole different world we live in.

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SECRETARY/ TREASURER

Al Grant

In the previous issue, Summer 162, the election procedures for nominations of Retired Detroit Police and Firefighters Association board positions were provided. All eight of the positions ran unopposed; President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, Sergeant at Arms (2) and Trustee (3). The terms for the elected offices are 1-1-2026 / 12-31-2028. The primary objective is to provide the members with information concerning the status of Pensions, Hospitalization and Insurances and to keep the members informed on all matters relative to the best interests of the Association and its members.

The Association will continue to organize five meetings in a calendar year, two General Membership meetings on the west side at the American Legion Carl E. Stitt Post 232 23850 Military Rd., Dearborn Heights (313) 274-8298 (the first Thursday in March and October) and two on east side at the American Polish Century 33204 Maple Lane Sterling Heights (586) 264-7990 (the first Thursday in May and December). The fifth meeting will be in Frankenmuth in June (date to be announced). The Association operates exclusively for the purpose set forth in Section 501 (c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The returning Board is familiar with the activities of the Association participating in a monthly board meeting. An agenda as stated in the By-Laws are followed with all reports presented and reviewed. The Association for 2026 will begin the new term in good shape. I am frequently asked about our membership numbers, presently the RDPFFA membership is just over four thousand (3,551 on payroll deduction / 511 not eligible for payroll deduction).

Membership remains to be a concern, addressing the matter, I am printing information from one my past issues. Our Association joins hundreds and probably thousands of social clubs across the United States struggling with growing their membership numbers. For example: Fraternal Orders of Association along with a number of other Societies and many other non-profit groups. For instance, VFW, American Legion, P.L.A.V., also numerous common interest fraternities all seem to have this dilemma.

Attitudes and outlooks have changed from the past generation that used to get involved with voluntary groups or unions. Regrettably, I cannot explain the change or why it happened, but we need to find a way to inform members and convey our message. All members will benefit from our past and future achievements and the Association's efforts tend to go unnoticed. A positive approach must be created explaining the need for increased membership which will strengthen our financial position to maintain our purpose. The $3.00 per month payment to the Association is such a small price to pay for all of the benefits received.

Detroit Police Department Retired Badges

Silver – $55.00 EA.* **Gold – $65.00 EA.***

Available to R.D.P.F.F.A. Members

Contact Retired Detroit Police Officer George Toy at:

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DEATH OF MEMBER

FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROCEDURE

Communications vary whether member was Police, Fire, or Sergeant and above. If you are Police make your first call to the Detroit Police Benefit & Protective Association, (313) 870-9304. Followed by either a call to the Detroit Police Officer Association, (313) 567-8770, or the Lieutenants & Sergeants (313) 961-5699, which ever applies.

While the Detroit Police Benefit & Protective Association will normally contact the City of Detroit with the information it would be reasonable to follow up with a call to the Pension Bureau, (313) 224-3362 Ext. 221 or 1 (800) 339-8344 and BeneSys (833) 725-5336 to make sure that they were notified. Last but not least, notify the Retired Detroit Police & Fire Fighters Association, (586) 795-1734.

Fire employees, start by notifying the Detroit Fire Fighter Association, (313) 962-7546, the Detroit Firemen's Fund Association, (313) 628-0099, Detroit Fire Mutual Fund call Firemen's Fund Association to leave a message, and the Detroit Pension Bureau, (313) 224-3362 or (800) 339-8344, ext 221.

The above agencies will assist you with the notification process. It would be a good idea to put this information with your secured legal documents or some other obvious place where your survivors can locate it.

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Welcome New Members!

July 2025

Wassenaar, Philip - Police

Joseph Crandall - Fire

Jeffery Schldmer - Fire

August 2025

Steven Carpenter - Police

Matthew Fulks - Police

James Edwards - Fire

Randy Manigault - Fire

September 2025

Gary Dettore - Police

William Rice Jr. - Police

MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE

For your information and the Association's benefit, it is important that when your summer/winter address changes, we are notified in advance of the move and again when you are returning to your home address. That way we can keep our records current. We don't want to lose you in the process.

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

11th Precinct Retirees Luncheon

Second Wednesday of the month at 1:00 P.M.

Buddy's Pizza - (586) 566-1233

45841 Hayes Rd • Shelby Township, MI 48315

Fire Fighters Breakfasts

First Monday of the month at 9:00 A.M.

Dimitri's Opa Restaurant – **(NEW LOCATION)**

50875 Gratiot Ave, Chesterfield, MI 48051-3133

Third Tuesday of the month at 9:00 A.M.

Omega Coney Island

22501 W. Eight Mile Rd., Detroit, MI

First Thursday of the month at 9:00 A.M.

IHOP Restaurant ***(NEW LOCATION)***

8075 Nemco Way • Brighton, MI 48116

(810) 225-6020

Exit 145 off of I96 (Enter off Grand River)

Former TMU Luncheon

Last Friday of the month

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ASSOCIATION CALENDAR OF EVENTS*

Updated!

General Membership Meeting Schedule:

AMERICAN POLISH CENTURY CLUB

33204 Maple Lane - Sterling Heights, MI - 7 PM

December 4, 2025

AMERICAN LEGION

Carl E. Stitt Post 232

23850 Military Rd - Dearborn Heights, MI - 7 PM

March 5, 2026

RDPFFA November Event

Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort - Mt. Pleasant, MI

Sunday, Nov 9 - Monday Nov 10, 2025

Snowbirds Of Michigan*

Meet 2nd Sunday of the month

May thru November

at "Fred of Roscommon"

430 N. 5th Street - Roscommon, MI

Social Hour 11:00 AM – Meeting at 1:00 PM

***Refer to columns for specifics or program changes**

Articles for the Winter 2026 Issue should be "submitted" by December 19, 2025

Snowbirds

Dan Zemaitis

Greetings from Northern Michigan

The "Snowbirds" organization was started officially on July 26, 1953. The explicit purpose being a social get-together for Retired Detroit Police and Firefighter and their spouses so they could visit, recall old times, renew old friendships and make new ones. The dues were $2.00 a year. Because of inflation, we changed it on July 9th, 2000 to $3.00 a year which is still what it still is.

Besides our monthly meetings, we do other group activities like trips, shows and picnics. Our August picnic in Prudenville was real nice as was the Higgins Lake pontoon cruise.

We care and are sorry when we lose members like Pete Gernand and we send our condolences to his wife Carol and their family. We also recognizes those who are ill and Birthdays and Anniversaries.

Our last meeting of 2025 was October 12, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. at Fred's of Roscommon. In the future, stop by and join us – the food is good too.

November Birthdays: Zig Boqumil, Bill Jasper, John Wood and Maryann Sypniewski

December Birthdays: Bob Rentz, Ted Ponik and Joann Cherry

January Birthdays: Jerry Ciesinski and Dan Zemaitis

Take care and God Bless.
Dan Zemaitis (989) 305-1035

Procedure to Obtain Retired Detroit Police Photo ID Cards

To obtain an ID card in person:

• Public Safety Headquarters

1301 Third Street, Detroit, MI 48226-2503

• Go to Central Photo for a digital picture

(located on the 3rd floor of Public Safety Headquarters)

You will be directed to the 6th floor to Detroit Police Personnel to complete process.

• Bring old DPD ID Card and Driver's License

-They will keep your old ID card.

Due to varied Covid restrictions please call (313) 596-2810 for further information!

The RDPFFA receives requests for advice and assistance with subjects that could affect our members. Generally the Association will avoid making recommendations although, a sound warning to our members will be to research the subject matter before contributing with any solicitation by phone or mail.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF U.S.

POST 1519

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Bernie Brennan at (734) 420-0250 or bbren16752@aol.com

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Members Letters

Thank you for continuing to fight for benefits and respect for men & women who served to protect their community. In memory of Joe Twardzik & Dennis Baaki.

Mark Bradick
Sterling Heights, MI

A heartfelt "Thank you" to your organization and all you do for retirees. Mike Simon was a huge supporter. This is a small donation in his memory.

Thank You.
Karen Simon Windsor, Ont

Please use the money as you see fit. In memory of my wife Irene Siedlik.

Bob Siedlik
Livonia, MI

In memory of my husband James C. Jasman. Use this money as best as needed.

Lenore Jasman
Sterling Heights, MI

Thank you for all you do for us retirees. Enclosed is a check to be used where most needed. Given in honor for 2 of "Detroit's Finest" Bill Boyd and Mike Gawronski.

Tim & Geri Kelly
Lenox Twp, MI

Please use this where needed and thank you all for what you do for us, God Bless.

Bill & Cathy Brown
New Braunfels, TX

This donation is in memory of our relatives who served in the DFD & DPD. **Fire:** Jim (Jake), John, Henry & Ron Velthuysen and Bob Lesperance. **DPD:** George (Bud) & Ken Klenk and Rev Dave Wandrie.

Tomas & Kathy Velthuysen
Pigeon, MI

Thank you for all you do! Use where needed.

John Danclovic
Novi, MI

Accept the first check in memory of my parents; Retired Police, Lieutenant James Tines (2015), & Arlene Tines (2025), Pam Collins, Nee (Tines), and second check for our appreciation of all the things you do for us. Hoping you all enjoy good health to keep on. Use the money for whatever is needed.

DFD Ret Captain Gary &
Pam Collins, Semper Fi
The Villages, FL

Please accept the enclosed donation in memory of Bernard Gable. To be used where needed. Thanks for all you do.

Ernie & Cheryl Macy
Macomb, MI

Dear Retiree Personnel, I appreciate all that you do for the Retired Detroit Police & Firefighters, and their spouses. You keep us updated with important information. Always there to help us with any concerns that we may have, and taking the time to answer our questions. Please use this check where ever needed, In memory of my late husband Lt. Joe Twardzik.

Helene Twardzik
Macomb, MI

Please use this check for the remembrance of Sgt. Morris Gekiere, use it where it's most needed. Thank you for all the good work you are doing, it is much appreciated.

Georgette Gekiere
Bushnell, FL

President Donald Taylor and Board: Please use this donation where it is needed most, and thank you for all that you do to help us retired Police Officers and Fire Fighters. This donation is in memory of my wife Janet and good friends and partners; P.O. Frank Walls, Lt. Ken Borieo, Cmdr. Bill Corbett.

Larry Holland
Harbor Springs, MI

(continued on next page)

Members Letters *(continued)*

Please accept this donation in memory of Police Officer Albert Vichunas. Thanks for all your support for retirees' issues.

Kathleen Vichunas
Shelby Twp., MI

RDPFFA Staff, Please accept this donation on behalf of the family of Firearms Instructors, Wayne C Sandlin. Please use it wherever needed. Thank you for everything you do to help keep & protect our benefits.

Liz & Jasen Sandlin
Livonia, MI

Please use this donation for the remembrance of P.O. Robert "Bob" Smith, where it's needed most. Thank you for all the work you do for our retirees.

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IN MEMORIAM

Once again, we call the roll and acknowledge those friends and associates who have left us since our last publication. It is hard to let go of good friends but it is easy to remember the good times we shared and realize that now they rest in peace.

Late Entries

Name	Rank	Dept.	Appointed	Retired	Date of Death	Age
Johnson, Micaela	P.O.	Police	2-19-24	Active/Academy	6-3-24	
Stevens, Leonard	Sgt.	Police	9-7-54	12-21-88	8-9-24	92
Winn, William	P.O.	Police	1-3-56	4-24-82	6-25-24	91
Havel, Dennis	P.O.	Police	12-6-71	8-12-81	5-21-25	76

July 2025

Name	Rank	Dept.	Appointed	Retired	Date of Death	Age
Gajeski, Richard	Sgt.	Police	10-21-57	1-3-90	7-20-25	88
Herrick, Daniel	P.O.	Police	10-1-57	1-4-85	7-16-25	90
Jordan, Sadie	Sgt.	Police	1-14-83	5-7-04	7-27-25	73
Kreza, Gerald	Sgt.	Police	9-25-61	2-29-92	7-2-25	88
Kwiatkowski, Henry	Sgt.	Police	7-9-62	9-6-89	7-10-25	84
Link, Daniel	Lt.	Police	5-7-73	4-28-06	7-5-25	76
Mitchell, Crear	Cmdr.	Police	11-26-62	9-8-90	7-2-25	89
Moede, Norman	P.O.	Police	5-8-72	7-31-89	7-22-25	78
Morrison, Christine	Invg.	Police	6-6-77	7-20-04	7-11-25	76
Saxby, William	P.O.	Police	2-13-50	2-13-75	7-14-25	97
Spaich, Anthony	P.O.	Police	2-23-48	3-1-73	7-19-25	100
Stinson, Richard	Sgt.	Police	6-6-55	7-8-80	7-15-25	91
Tokman, Gerald	P.O.	Police	1-20-74	2-19-88	7-7-25	76
Zadorozny, Patricia	Insp.	Police	9-25-61	6-25-92	7-1-25	86
Bozich, Joseph	Sr, Chief	Fire	9-12-60	1-18-98	7-2-25	87
Doell, Danny	FF	Fire	10-5-70	2-12-81	7-16-25	77
Koehler, Louis	FF	Fire	2-15-54	9-10-73	7-18-25	94
Slowke, Dennis	Capt.	Fire	12-11-72	4-4-05	7-16-25	75
Weil, Lester	Capt.	Fire	9-12-60	6-1-92	7-21-25	91
Wilson, Bryan	Lt.	Fire	9-8-97	Died Active	7-8-25	51

August 2025

Name	Rank	Dept.	Appointed	Retired	Date of Death	Age
Bully, Stephanie	P.O.	Police	7-21-86	9-6-94	8-13-25	65
Dekun, Michael	P.O.	Police	5-16-66	9-27-91	8-25-25	82
Durkin, William	P.O.	Police	3-10-77	11-29-84	8-26-25	75
Hill, Harry III	P.O.	Police	3-8-71	7-28-81	8-8-25	77
Jackson, Charles	Cmdr.	Police	1-31-55	12-1-90	8-28-25	90
Jennings, Michael	P.O.	Police	9-11-72	10-10-92	8-18-25	74
Loch, John	P.O.	Police	1-3-61	7-9-97	8-29-25	88
Lyons, George	P.O.	Police	9-29-69	10-15-82	8-29-25	81
Malinowski, Philip	P.O.	Police	6-30-75	3-30-94	8-5-25	71
Morris, Carl E.	P.O.	Police	4-7-86	4-27-08	8-25-25	79
Morris, Rhonda	Corp.	Police	8-30-96	Died Active	8-18-25	50
Olariu, Alex Jr.	P.O.	Police	12-11-72	1-7-03	8-23-25	77

(continued on next page)

In Memoriam *(continued)*

August 2025

Name	Rank	Dept.	Appointed	Retired	Date of Death	Age
Peltier, Ernest	P.O.	Police	5-15-67	9-26-92	8-5-25	79
Powell, Albert	P.O.	Police	3-20-97	5-27-08	8-15-25	70
Russell, Nedra	Sgt.	Police	5-28-89	10-2-12	8-5-25	58
Saenz, Richard	Lt.	Police	3-31-75	10-8-05	8-14-25	72
Shaw, Joseph	P.O.	Police	3-26-73	5-2-93	8-4-25	78
Shimp, Norman	P.O.	Police	11-13-67	1-2-89	8-8-25	82
Sutton, Clyde	P.O.	Police	5-26-77	7-30-82	8-15-25	78
Willis, Gerald	Sgt.	Police	1-8-62	1-9-97	8-26-25	86
Ziemba, Edward	P.O.	Police	4-27-70	7-15-00	8-3-25	76
Berrelez, Justin	FF	Fire	11-3-14	Died Active	8-24-25	37
Dimaggio, Manuel	SFPI	Fire	6-10-51	7-19-76	8-17-25	95

September 2025

Name	Rank	Dept.	Appointed	Retired	Date of Death	Age
Aquilina, Michael	P.O.	Police	3-27-78	8-20-93	9-10-25	76
Carlson, Brianne	P.O.	Police	4-25-16	9-9-25	9-18-25	32
Cronin, William	P.O.	Police	7-7-85	10-14-88	9-28-25	72
Drake, Maggie	Sgt.	Police	9-19-67	12-30-92	9-19-25	81
Gernand, Peter	P.O.	Police	11-17-69	1-8-00	9-7-25	80
Gossard, Daniel	Sgt.	Police	8-5-68	1-6-98	9-22-25	82
Guffrey, Rudolph	Lt.	Police	6-5-50	12-10-75	9-15-25	99
Heimes, Richard	P.O.	Police	10-26-70	10-26-95	9-30-25	83
Jones, Gary	P.O.	Police	8-8-77	11-2-02	9-29-25	67
Mlostek, Donald	P.O.	Police	3-18-68	9-1-78	9-12-25	78
Shavers, George	P.O.	Police	12-14-69	1-24-04	9-14-25	82
Simmons, Emma	P.O.	Police	9-25-77	7-8-02	9-13-25	69
Stirzinger, Gary	Bt. Chief	Fire	2-11-74	1-25-12	9-13-25	71
Vorpagel, Charles	FEO	Fire	9-9-57	2-25-88	9-24-25	93
Williams, Joseph L Jr.	Capt.	Fire	12-5-77	2-29-12	9-20-25	71

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Michigan Fallen Heroes Memorial Ceremony

Thursday, September 11, 2025

A Memorial Ceremony was held on Thursday, September 11, 2025 commemorating the Anniversary of 9/11 and to honor law enforcement and fire fighters who lost their lives in the line of duty. The event was held at the Michigan Fallen Heroes Memorial in Pontiac, Michigan. The service opened with a Processional led by the Metro Detroit Police and Fire Pipes and Drums followed by Master of Ceremonies Ty Steele, anchor/reporter with Local 4 News. After the opening ceremonies, Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard (founder of the Michigan Fallen Heroes Memorial) presented the Memorial Scholarship. Al Grant represented the RDPFFA.

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The following supporters, their names and in names of their loved ones, have contributed most generously to our Legal, Appreciation and P.A.C. Funds. Your continued support of our Association is the encouragement we need and reflects your recognition of the Association's efforts in your behalf.

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