



NEWS FROM

Teamsters Local 355

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ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT BATTALION CHIEFS CHOOSE TEAMSTERS

Battalion Chiefs Unite for Strength of Teamsters Local 355 Representation

(BALTIMORE) –Anne Arundel County Fire Department battalion chiefs have voted unanimously to join Teamsters Local 355 in Baltimore.

The group organized three years ago as an independent association, but decided in September to seek the organized umbrella of a larger union that could provide the experience and assistance they need to continue to negotiate and enforce their contract.

“Though we have had success defending our contractual rights, we have had limited resources to pursue some issues. We are a small unit of 17 members, unconnected and without access to the advice and resources of a larger labor organization, and the county knew it,” said Michael Smith, former president of the Battalion Chiefs Association.

Smith has been with the Anne Arundel County Fire Department for 25 years, moving up the ranks from firefighter to his current position as battalion chief.

“We’re happy to have this group join our ranks,” said Dan Taylor, a business agent with Teamsters Local 355. “I think we’ll have a great working relationship and we look forward to positive negotiations starting in early January 2015.”

The chiefs serve directly under the fire chief of Anne Arundel County. The county is divided into four geographic areas with four battalion chiefs covering each of four schedule shifts, and one “rover” chief designated to cover vacations and other leave. They support 31 town and city fire stations, directing and coordinating management and delivery of emergency fire and medical services to the citizens of the county.

(MORE)

Page 2 of 2/Anne Arundel County Fire Department Battalion Chiefs Choose Teamsters

Smith is a Second Battalion chief, charged with coordination oversight for 76 employees and nine fire stations from the Bay Bridge to the Key Bridge.

Until recently, Teamsters Local 355's relationship with the chiefs association was an indirect one. Both labor groups have a common link through the local labor counsel, Jim Rosenberg.

Attorney Rosenberg represented the battalion chiefs in grievances and arbitrations.

Initial meetings between Teamsters Local 355 leadership and the Battalion Chiefs Association were held in 2013. In September of this year, a change in Association leadership generated a renewed interest in the Teamsters Union.

In October, they submitted a decertification petition to the county and the employees were notified in early December a representation election had been scheduled.

They voted to join Teamsters Local 355 in a representation election held December 10, 2014.

"We are thrilled to be with the Teamsters. The big union is like our big brother," said Smith, pleased that his group showed their unanimous agreement at the ballot box.

Smith and former Association vice president John McNally will be shop stewards for Teamsters Local 355's newest unit.