2021 FALL LEGISLATIVE REPORT

As the state legislature is wrapping up for this year, we have a few bills to get through the legislation. If not we have to work on them starting in January.

Following are two bills that have an immediate effect on the fire service:

**2021 ASSEMBLY BILL 308** May 3, 2021 - Introduced by Representatives Krug, Subeck, Mursau, Moses,  
Bowen, Brandtjen, Gundrum, Plumer, Spiros, Tusler, RAMTHUN and Horlacher,  
cosponsored by Senators Testin and L. Taylor. *Referred to Committee on  
Ways and Means.*

This bill creates an individual income tax checkoff for the Wisconsin State  
Firefighters Memorial, Inc., the proceeds of which support the construction,  
improvement, and maintenance of the fire fighters memorial. The bill requires that  
an amount equal to the total amount of designations received, less the total cost of  
administering the income tax checkoff procedure, be transferred to the corporation.

Currently, there are eight permanent checkoffs to which taxpayers may make  
a designation. Current law prohibits the Department of Revenue from placing more  
than 10 checkoffs, not including temporary checkoffs, on the income tax form.  
Current law also requires DOR to remove from the tax forms any checkoffs that do  
not generate at least an average of $50,000 of designations per year over the most  
recent three-year period. Formerly, a temporary checkoff for the fire fighters  
memorial appeared on the tax forms, but it was removed by DOR because it failed  
to generate the required level of designations. The checkoff created in the bill would  
be a permanent checkoff.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

2021 SENATE BILL 321 as above, April 21, 2021 - Introduced by Senators Testin and L. Taylor, cosponsored by Representatives Krug, Subeck, Mursau, Moses, Bowen, Brandtjen,  
Gundrum, Plumer, Spiros, Tusler and Horlacher. *Referred to Committee on  
Financial Institutions and Revenue.*

<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2021/proposals/ab308>

**AB 297 AND SB 311**

This bill increases the penalties for certain traffic violations that are committed  
within 500 feet of an authorized emergency vehicle giving a visible signal or a tow  
truck displaying flashing red lamps (emergency or roadside response area).

Under current law, the amount of any applicable minimum and maximum fine  
or forfeiture is doubled for specified traffic violations committed where persons  
working in a highway maintenance or construction area or utility area are at risk  
from traffic. These traffic violations include failing to follow certain traffic signs and  
signals, failing to follow certain orders of traffic officers, exceeding certain maximum  
speed limits, and driving recklessly. Under the bill, the minimum and maximum fine  
or forfeiture for these covered violations is also doubled when committed in an  
emergency or roadside response area. Also under the bill, if an operator commits one of the covered violations in a highway maintenance or construction area, utility work  
area, or emergency or roadside response area and the violation results in an injury  
to another, the operator may be fined not more than $10,000 or imprisoned not more  
than nine months, or both.

Current law prohibits inattentive driving of a motor vehicle in general and in  
several specific manners. Among the specific prohibitions is a prohibition of using  
a wireless telephone while driving a motor vehicle in a construction zone. A person  
who violates this particular prohibition may be required to forfeit not less than $20  
nor more than $40 for the first offense and not less than $50 nor more than $100 for  
the second or subsequent conviction within a year.

The bill specifically prohibits using a wireless telephone while driving a motor  
vehicle in an emergency or roadside response area. The penalty for a violation of this  
prohibition is the same as is provided for the offense described above.

~~Also under current law, local authorities may post temporary reduced speed  
limits on highways under construction or repair. The bill allows law enforcement  
officers, fire fighters, or emergency medical responders to post temporary reduced  
speed limits in response to an emergency.~~ This was removed by the Senate.

It should be ready to pass on to the governor for signing.  <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2021/proposals/ab297>

======================================

The Wisconsin Fire & EMS Memorial has operated in the red for the past 4 years. Operating the memorial, maintaining the park is losing money at the rate of $25,000.00 to $32,000.00 per year.

In addition the Wall of Honor needs to be expanded at the cost of $38,000.00. The reason for the expansion is that there is NO room on the Wall for new names to be added.

There is a major contributor that has offered to match any donations made on November 30th. Please pass this on to your members. **Wisconsin Fire and EMS Memorial will be attempting to raise money on Giving Tuesday (November 30th) that we have a Donor who will match fund**