



ON THE LOOKOUT

From the
National Chairman
Keith A. Argow
Vienna, Virginia
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RECORD NUMBER OF DIRECTORS PARTICIPATE IN 2013 ANNUAL BOARD MEETING

At the meeting of the FFLA Board at the 2012 Western Conference, directors present suggested that we try a phone hook-up for the up-coming January 2013 Annual Board meeting to make possible participation by directors who could not travel to the meeting in person. We did and it proved a success. Of the 32 directors and officers on the board, four were there in person and 13 attended by phone for a total of 17. The format worked so well that we will use it again in January 2014.

The meeting was hosted by the Florida Forest Service at their historic Withlacoochee Forestry Center in central Florida. The opening program was presented by John Kerns, Region 3 Deputy Chief for Operations. In 1983 there were 204 fire towers in the state; today there are 101 divided into four categories: Primary, Secondary, Reserve and Surplus. There was discussion on ways to maintain some of those on the surplus list through local partnerships.

Six years ago a Snowbird Fire Observer program was organized. Every winter a huge number of retirees come to Florida to escape the cold weather; they are known by the locals as "snowbirds." With many on fixed incomes, the idea was to provide a no-cost pad for an RV with water, electricity and sewer (about an \$800/month value at an RV park) at fire tower locations in exchange for volunteer observer duty. The program had promise, but a drawback developed when the "snowbirds" returned north in the spring, while fire danger was still high. Moreover,

WELCOME NEW OFFICERS

This year we welcome two new Deputy Chairmen: Howard Verschoor in the Western Region and Ron Stafford in the Southern Region. Along with Eastern Deputy Mark Haughwout, their responsibilities are being expanded to maintain regular contact with each of our 30 chapter directors. Their first order of business is to assure that every chapter has a 2012 Annual Report on file and posted in the website. How successful they are will be readily apparent to all us. More significant, it will help identify those directors whose available time or interests have shifted and are no longer able to serve. To achieve our goals, FFLA has to have an effective and committed leadership at all levels.

Bob Spear continues as Historian, and Ray Grimes was elected as Secretary (dropping the title of "Acting").

Also in this issue comes word of the retirement of two longtime directors. Kathy Allison is stepping down as the California Sierra/Nevada Chapter Director, but will continue as Chair of the Buck Rock Foundation. She will remain active in FFLA in other roles and has groomed a knowledgeable successor, Chris Fabbro. Southern Idaho Director Jill Osborn has also stepped down and we are recruiting a successor. A warm thanks to both wonderful ladies!

TWO SUMMER MEETINGS IN 2013

The very popular summer meetings are the time when FFLA members socialize and get to

there was not as much continuing interest in the program as had been anticipated.

Following the success of the Fire Lookout Host programs in southern California, plus volunteer staffing programs in many states that still staff lookouts, there is interest in developing a new Florida Firewatchers program with the Florida Forest Service, FFLA, and local community organizations. We are in the first step now, identifying the local groups that might participate and provide the volunteers. This will also be a good opportunity for FFLA to generate new members and supporters.

NEW FFLA.ORG WEBSITE UNVEILED

Years in the making, the new and improved FFLA website is up and running thanks to the diligent efforts of Webmaster Bill Cobb. Check it out. You'll be impressed with the huge amount of information about fire lookouts that is available and how easily it can be navigated.

know one another, in addition to visiting new lookouts. This year the Western meeting will be in Mayhill, New Mexico September 19-23 and a joint Eastern - Southern meeting will be held in Beckley WV (junction of two Interstate highways) June 21 - 22. For those in the Northwest who cannot get to New Mexico (their loss, but it is a long drive), Howard Verschoor is organizing an FFLA campout July 19-21 on the Umatilla National Forest.

2013 looks to be a very good year for FFLA. Financially we are sound, but we are stuck at 900+ members. This year can grow to 1000 members. How? Look in the next issue of Lookout Network.

Keith A. Argow

CEO/Chairman of the Board

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