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IAFF Launches Smoking Cessation Campaign with Pfizer

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(BUSINESS WIRE)--The International Association of Fire Fighters has announced the launch of a new initiative to help fire fighters, family members and friends to quit smoking cigarettes.

“Our goal is to help make the IAFF the first smoke-free union,” IAFF General President Harold Schaitberger said in his address to delegates at the IAFF 49th Convention.

The IAFF is collaborating with pharmaceutical company Pfizer Inc. to promote smoking cessation. Schaitberger and Pfizer CEO Jeff Kindler first announced the joint initiative at the IAFF Health and Safety Conference in Chicago, Illinois, in October 2007.

The campaign includes materials designed to help fire fighters understand the risks of smoking and provide information on how to quit. These and other resources are available on a new web site at www.iaff.org/smokefree. In the coming weeks, the campaign will add new resources, including a DVD featuring stories from fire fighters about how they quit smoking. The web site and other materials are available to assist IAFF affiliates across North America in reaching out to members, families and communities to promote and encourage smoking cessation.

Smoking is a major health risk for fire fighters who are already at high risk for illnesses, including heart disease, respiratory disease and certain cancers. In addition, smoking is the leading cause of fires and a significant occupational risk for fire fighters.

“We congratulate the IAFF for its commitment to this campaign and look forward to working together toward the goal of a smoke-free union,” Kindler said. “Fire fighters are respected leaders in their communities, and this program on smoking cessation reaffirms that leadership.”

“Fire fighters place themselves in harm’s way, confront dangerous environments, high heat and flames, and exposure to burning materials,” Schaitberger said. “It’s stressful work and some respond to stress by smoking. Yet smoking increases the health risks fire fighters face. We want to help prevent that.”

The International Association of Fire Fighters, headquartered in Washington, DC, represents more than 288,000 full-time professional fire fighters and paramedics who protect 85 percent of the nation’s population. More information is available at www.iaff.org

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