

ALBUQUERQUE FIREFIGHTER'S UNION
(By Herman R. Bishop, Historian, AFD Retiree's Association)
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According to hand written ledgers of the Albuquerque Fire Department as early as 1916 perhaps, 1915 there were attempts to organize a firefighters union. (See James Cosgrove Jr.'s Story). In 1917 the issue surfaced again. This caused considerable turmoil and the changing of several Fire Chiefs which continued on through the early 1920's. Numerous firemen were fired for union activity and many resigned because of the issue with the City. (See story of Fire Chief Fred Russell).

The International Association of Firefighters was establish February 28, 1918 in Washington, D.C.

Another story is that the Albuquerque Fireman received an official Union Charter from the International Association of Firefighters, (IAFF), in 1921. No one has been able to find a copy of this Charter including the International Association of Firefighters. Daily fire station logs reference unionization attempts, firing of firemen for union activity, and Changing Fire Chief's frequently (1916 to early 1920's) because of attempts to unionize. Unfortunately the annual reports of the fire department are missing from the following years (1916, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923 and 1924. It is speculated that the missing annual reports have something to do with union activity during those years.

Old timers told of attempts to unionize during 1947 and 1948. From all indications these attempts to unionize failed. On October 25, 1955 the International Association of Firefighters issued an official Union Charter to the "Albuquerque Association of Firefighters," Local 244, predecessor to the current Local 244.

ALBUQUERQUE FIREMEN FORM UNION (October 25, 1955)
(No Contracts were negotiated, Union never recognized By the City)

The names on this charter were: Nick Saavedra, Joe L. Gonzales, S. B. Skidmore, Paul Cooper, Albert R. Mobley, A. B. Martinez, Juan Sanchez, Carmen Padilla Sr. William Devine, Leo J. Renaud, Isidro Garcia, Jimmy Chavez, Phillip B. Smith, Pio Chavez, Daniel N. Tafoya Jr. Joe L. Montoya, Earnest Rael, Rudy Jaramillo, Paul Garcia Sr. Leonard Zamora Jr. Martin Romero, Thomas Krupiak, Filberto Montano, and Benny Chavez. This union was never recognized by the City and no union contracts were negotiated.

NOVEMBER 16, 1962 UNIONIZATION EFFORTS BY FIREFIGHTERS SUCCESSFUL
(Local 1455 Formed, City Signs Contract with Local Firefighters, Union Here to Stay)

In the early 1960's the issue of a firefighter's union was raised again. The City fought hard against unionization of firefighters. On November 16, 1962 a Charter was issued by the International Association of Firefighters to the "Albuquerque Firefighter's Union, local 1455. The names on this Union Charter were: Leonard Ortega, Francisco Quintana, John Sanders, Ernie Archuleta, Juan Sanchez, Raymond Carillo, Gabe Jaramillo, Eugene N. Griego, Santiago Torres, Jose O. Padilla, Ross Aranda, Santos G. Abeyta, Chris Martinez, Kenneth Adams, B.F. Chenault, Billy Ray Smith, R.A. Cypert, Ed Nicholds, Everisto Marquez, John E. Nash, Ronnie Turrietta, Horace V. Vigil, Raul Vargas, Dale Noblitt, Joe G. Hernandez. (25 members) During the next two years a heated struggle between the City of Albuquerque and the Firefighter's Union ensued. Finally the City realized that this union was here to stay and would not go away. The union was not broken and finally a contract was signed recognizing the firefighter's union.

PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS OF BERNALILLO COUNTY FORMED APRIL 25, 1979
(CHARTER ISSUED TO LOCAL 2696 BY INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF F.F.)

On April 25, 1979 the International Association of Firefighters issued a charter to the "United Professional Firefighters of Bernalillo County. Local 2696. During the next few years both firefighters unions of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County continued growing with success.

THREE ALBUQUERQUE AREA FIREFIGHTER'S UNIONS MERGE
(JUNE 11, 2002, NEW CHARTER ISSUED TO LOCAL 244 BY IAFF)

During 2002 the three local firefighters unions of Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, and Kirtland Air Force Base merged into one union. The firefighters felt it appropriate that they request the original local union number, 244 which had issued to the Albuquerque Firefighter's Union in 1955.

On June 11, 2002 the International Association of Firefighters issued a new charter, the "Albuquerque Association of Firefighters," local 244. The names on the new union charter were: John Garcia, Emily Kane, Simon Baca, Pat Chavez, Chris Carlsen, Art Martinez, Keven Pierce, Christopher Petroff, Mike Fox, Andrew Casaus, James Dye, Gary DeJong, Gabe Blea, Christopher Fichtner, Don Bourne, Adriane Moya, Devon Sullivan, Bob Oronea, Alfredo Cordova, Pat Goodyear, Darrell Lindsey.