

142ND DISTRICT

Farry does double duty as state rep, fire chief

Helping small businesses with health insurance and bringing more state funding back to suburban school districts are two priorities for the new state representative.

By CHRIS ENGLISH
STAFF WRITER

When he's not busy making state law, Frank Farry still wants to douse a flame or two.

Farry, 36, the newly elected Republican state representative for the 142nd District, also was just elected for another year as fire chief of the Langhorne-Middletown Fire Co. — his ninth straight year in the position.

"When I decided to run for state representative, one of the important things for me was still being able to serve in a volunteer capacity through the fire service," said Farry, a Langhorne resident. "I think our calendar has us in session in Harrisburg for 51 days in the first half of the year. That should still leave a lot of days when I'm in the district and I'd still like to respond to as many fire calls as possible."

In the meantime, Farry is looking forward to his swearing-in ceremony at noon Tuesday in Harrisburg, where he will be joined by a busload of supporters.

One of the first things Farry wants to do as a state representative is work on two bills that are designed to give the county commissioners the authority to eliminate the jury commissioner positions.

The Bucks County commissioners recently cut the salary and benefits of the two elected commissioners, one from each party, but Farry wants to give them the power to go further.

The jury commissioners meet twice a year to review lists of jurors and look for names of residents who cannot serve. The functions are now essentially served by county workers and computers, and many consider the jury commissioners unnecessary.

"The (county) commissioners are facing a very tight budget and are handcuffed in their efforts to save more money," Farry said. "I'd like to empower them to eliminate the positions."

Along with the other legislators, Farry also will be working on the new state budget that must be passed by July 1 — and looking at ways to trim this fiscal year's budget.

Two other issues high on Farry's list are helping small businesses with employee health care needs and bringing more Harrisburg education dollars back to the suburban school districts like Neshaminy, which is in his legislative district.

"Educational funding is extremely disproportionate for the suburban districts around Philadelphia," he said. "It's disproportionate between the amount of revenue these districts generate and the amount of funding that comes back to them from the state. I and the other state legislators representing suburban districts would be irresponsible if we didn't go out there and fight for more funding."

In trying to set his own example of fiscal responsibility, Farry said he won't accept a state car or cell phone. He's also one of several area state legislators who aren't taking a cost-of-living pay increase for 2009.

Farry said he plans to donate his raise, more than \$2,000, to various athletic organizations throughout the 142nd District.

"These volunteer organizations are quite often overlooked entities in terms of the services they do for the community and their mentoring of children," he said. "Coming from a volunteer service like the fire department, I understand how tight their budgets can be and I'd like to help them out a little."

Farry has set up his main district office in Suite 307 of the Maple Square office complex, 340 East Maple Avenue in Middletown. Staffers are there, and the phones are scheduled to be installed Tuesday. In the meantime, Farry can be e-mailed at or reached by phone at 866-901-2482.

The district office is supposed to move to Suite 102 of the Maple Square complex by March 1, when renovations are completed. Farry also wants to open a parttime satellite office somewhere in Lower Southampton in the spring.

Farry represents Langhorne, Langhorne Manor, Hulmeville, Penndel, most of Middletown and most of Lower Southampton.

Chris English can be reached at 215-949-4193 or .



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