

State firefighters conference to be held in Corbin

by: Trent Knuckles

The 2005 Kentucky State Firefighter's Association Conference will be held in Corbin, according to a special announcement today -- the first time the convention has ever been held in a southeastern Kentucky city.

A special announcement luncheon was held at the Corbin Chamber of Commerce meeting room Wednesday morning to reveal the news. Bill Robbins, Jr., president of the Kentucky State Firefighter's Association (KFA), said he was excited to be making the announcement.

"All of our other conferences have always been held in Lexington, Louisville, northern Kentucky, Ashland, Paducah or Bowling Green. I wanted to bring my conference home to the mountains," he said. "The City of Corbin and the tri-county area are making us feel welcome and wanted."

Robbins, whose official term as president begins Aug. 1, is filling in a partial term vacated by the past president. He said Corbin Industrial Recruiter Bob Terrell, Tourism Commission member Dennis Lynch, City Manager Bill Ed Cannon and Corbin Fire Chief Gary Disney are primarily responsible for bringing the conference to Corbin.

"They have bent over backwards to help us bring this conference here," Robbins said. "Without them diligently working with us and helping us financially ... we couldn't have brought it to Corbin."

The conference will be held July 31-Aug. 4. Robbins said anywhere from 500 to 1,000 people attend annually.

Terrell said about 400 hotel rooms locally will be purchased by attendees. Many, Robbins said, come early and stay after the convention is over, taking vacations where the conference is held.

The conference will kick off Saturday at the Corbin Civic Center grounds with the Kentucky State Firefighter Olympics and Junior Olympics. State championships in various competitions will be awarded.

Several programs will take place Sunday including a memorial service at First United Methodist Church to honor Kentucky firefighters who have died in the past year.

On Monday, there will be a business meeting and a ladies program for spouses. Also, a golf tournament will be held at the Tri-County Country Club. A pool party, barbeque and cookout will be held that evening.

Meeting, training programs and exhibits will take place at the Civic Center and new Corbin Technology Center on Tuesday with a banquet at the Corbin Civic Center that night. During the banquet, six people will be inducted into the Kentucky Firefighter's Association Hall of Fame. New officers of the KFA will also be sworn in.

The conference will end Wednesday with an executive board meeting.

"We're delighted that they decided to have it in Corbin next year," Terrell said.

Terrell said the construction of the tech center and plans for a new civic center should increase tourism in coming years.

"I believe we're going to find we'll attract more conventions and different groups to come here," he said. "We will have some very outstanding facilities to do this. It's a very positive thing for our area. It's also bound to help the development of our businesses."