February 15th, 2013

Tony Marquardt, President
Austin/Travis County EMS Employee Association
CWA District 6 local 6914
5817 Wilcab Road, Suite 3
Austin TX 78721

The citizens of Austin enjoy one of the best EMS systems in the country. The men and women of the Austin Travis County EMS and the Austin Fire Department work in harmony every day to make this possible, providing the best possible patient care to our citizens.

The firefighters of AFD provide initial EMS response and basic care until advanced care and transport capability arrives, provided by Austin Travis County EMS paramedics. In cases of severe injuries and illnesses, the crews of both organizations become a single transport team, dedicated to providing the best care possible for patients. At all times, patients are under the supervision of the highest medically trained and system cleared professional on scene, almost always evolving to an ATC/EMS paramedic.

Trade publications across the country recognize both departments as the top in their perspective fields. While responders from two separate organizations operate seamlessly in the field, they also operate with separate administrations, labor organizations, policies and procedures and command systems. But most EMS care across the United States falls within the scope, duties and directions of the Fire Department.

With the ATC/EMS Labor organization’s recent achievement of receiving chapter 143 civil service status, both organizations are now properly lined up to discuss the possibility of future consolidation. The Austin Firefighters Association (Local 975), recognizes that as a labor organization, we are in a position to offer an invitation to our EMS brothers and sisters to discuss a mutually agreed upon consolidation and merger plan for our departments.

We believe a combined system would greatly benefit the citizens we serve by reducing administrative costs. Further, a consolidated workforce would greatly benefit the members of both organizations through improved benefits and pension programs, reduction in workplace burnout and a shared command structure.
Since consolidation affects two separate labor unions, the offer to discuss a plan must be a formal invitation. This invitation is in no way precipitated by any other current events, audits or studies. It is a good faith invitation from IAFF Local 975 to the ATC/EMS Local.

Please consider this as a formal request to begin discussions regarding a consolidation of ATC/EMS and AFD and a possible merger of our two locals. We hope you will consider this a friendly offer to jointly shape a better future for both organizations.

Sincerely,

Bob Nicks
President, Austin Firefighters Association
IAFF Local 975