



INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS

LOCAL UNION 953 NEWS – DECEMBER 2010

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OUR ADDRESS

2206 Highland Avenue
Post Office Box 3005
Eau Claire, WI 54702
TEL: 715-834-4911

INTERNET WEB PAGE

www.ibew953.org

E-mail Staff, see Web Page
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MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

From the Staff of Local 953

Dale Bob Brady Marty Don and Connie

Brothers and Sisters,

It's hard to believe that the year of 2010 has come and gone already! It seems like it was just January and very soon it will be January again.

At the Local Union we have all been working hard trying to complete this year's contract negotiations. Once again, medical insurance is the biggest issue at the bargaining table with high deductible/health savings account plans leading the way. The vast majority of the Cooperatives that we represent have introduced the high deductible insurance plans to our members, hoping this will help to contain the cost of medical insurance. As far as the wage increases, this year has been better with the average wage increase around 3%. Currently Xcel Energy contract negotiations are set to resume with health insurance being the number #1 issue, as well. The municipal contract negotiations are getting into full swing, there again, health insurance costs being the employers #1 issue. With that being said, I think that most of us hoped that somewhere in the health insurance reform laws that were signed in March of 2010, there would eventually be some help to contain health insurance costs. With all the changes that are going to take place in Washington's political arena, as a result of the mid-term elections, we will again have to wait and see if there is any hope in slowing down the never ending increase to medical costs.

I personally want to wish all of you, the members of Local 953 and your families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Please be safe this Holiday Season and remember.....Protect your CDL's!

Fraternally yours,

Dale Blank
Business Manager/Financial Secretary

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

At the time of this writing, the results of the ballot count for the Xcel Energy Labor Agreement have been tallied resulting in the membership voting against the proposed tentative agreement by a 3 – 1 margin. A meeting date of December 6, 2010, has been set to resume talks. I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to those of you who were able to attend the explanation meetings. As always, your thoughts, questions and comments were, and are, greatly appreciated. In the near future, you will once again have an opportunity to vote on another proposed agreement. Please exercise your right to vote, make yourself heard!

I would like to address a topic that I believe the membership is not as aware of, as it should be. That would be your Weingarten Rights. These rights are sometimes confused with the Miranda Rights. Under Miranda, a police officer must communicate to a person that he has the right to an attorney. Your Weingarten rights do not go that far, an employer is not required to alert an employee of their representation rights. Under Miranda, if the individual's rights are ignored, their confession cannot be introduced as evidence. Under Weingarten, a confession can serve as grounds for discipline/termination even if management violates the interrogation rules.

Therefore, I cannot place enough emphasis on how important it is for you to become familiar with your Weingarten Rights. Listed below are your options in the event that you do become involved with an investigatory interview that may lead to discipline.

1. Request Representation.
2. If Representation is not available you may:
 - A) Request to discontinue the meeting until Representation is available (The Company cannot mandate someone to serve as your representative).
 - B) Continue on with the Meeting. (This is not recommended)

“I request Union Representation”

“I believe this discussion could lead to my being disciplined. I therefore request reasonable time to consult with my union representative regarding the subject and purpose of the meeting. Please consider this a continuing request; without representation I shall not participate in the discussion. I shall not consent to any searches or tests affecting my person, property, or effects without first consulting with my union representative.”

In closing, I would like to pass my best wishes along to the entire membership of Local Union 953 for the upcoming Holiday Season. May it be a safe and happy one for all of you!

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!

During this Holiday Season, please give some thought and prayer to those in our Military who cannot be home with their families. May God Bless them and all who have fought before them.

My appreciation and respect for all you do.....

In Solidarity,

Robert J. Lahti
Asst. Business Manager

Dear Brothers & Sisters:

Another year is coming to a close. For some members it has been more challenging than for others. Some of our brothers and sisters have successfully negotiated successor contracts, while others are still in the process of negotiations. Each year, we fight different issues and battles together.

Because of the economy and foreign competition, many of our members in the manufacturing sector have taken wage and benefit cuts, suffered layoffs, and are dealing with the possibility of concessions and/or plant closures. With their futures unknown, these members continue to show up and perform to the best of their abilities. In facing these tough challenges, by continuing to show solidarity and their willingness to make it work, hopefully a brighter future is in store.

This type of dedication does not go unnoticed, and personally, I am proud to represent these brothers and sisters. For those who the year has been less challenging, let us keep in our thoughts, our fellow Union Members that have struggled this past year.

I wish all of you a happy holiday season and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

In Solidarity,

Martin D. Sandberg
Asst. Business Manager

Season's Greetings to our Membership:

2010 was a challenging year for this local, with many of the contracts which we represent up for negotiations. The pressures of the economic recession and slow recovery have impacted us dramatically, creating a difficult environment to reach settlements. Health Care and retirement were at the forefront of this fight, forcing all of us to judge what we value the most. Together we forced down these obstacles and for many of us traveling into uncharted waters, things like high deductible health plans and health savings accounts, along with the threat of changes to our retirement, made it more important now than ever to stand together as a Union.

I would like to thank all the stewards and committee members that assisted with contract negotiations, your knowledge and input was more important than you may have realized.

Congratulations to all the Apprentices that completed their training this year! Please stay involved in your Union ~ You are the future of the Trade and Union Movement!

Wishing all of you a safe and Happy New Year!

In Solidarity,

Brady Weiss
Vice President/
Asst. Business Manager