



INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS **LOCAL UNION 953 NEWS – OCTOBER 2011**

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Thank you for giving me the distinct honor and privilege of sharing in representing Local 953's membership at the 38th International Convention, which was held in Vancouver, B.C. Canada. International President, Ed Hill and Secretary-Treasurer Sam Chilia were re-elected, along with Sixth District Vice-President Lonnie Stephenson and Fifth District International Executive Council Representative Michael Walter to 5 year terms.

It is sad to report that Union Membership in the IBEW continues to decline. The numbers show a loss of another 30,000 members since the last convention in 2006. A lot of this loss is tied to the continued loss of the manufacturing base in the United States, along with continuing decline in the market share of the electrical industry.

The IBEW's constitution directs all Local Unions and the International to "Organize" all persons in the electrical industry in their jurisdiction and as you are well aware of organizing cost money. With that said President Hill asked for and received the go ahead to raise the International portion of the Union dues. The dues increase will be as follows:

"A" & "BA" Members

1-1-2012 - increase \$2.00 per month

1-1-2014 - increase \$2.00 per month

1-1-2016 – increase \$1.00 (if membership fails to meet 1% growth)

"A" Members Only

1-1-2013 – \$1.00 additional increase per month

1-1-2015 – \$1.00 additional increase per month

The "A" and "BA" membership dues increase will be used to put on more regional organizers throughout the United States and Canada. The "A" member additional dues increase shall be used to help strengthen the pension benefit fund for those that choose to be "A" Members. A full report of the convention proceedings will be available on the International's web site in the near future.

The Utility Workers Coalition of Wisconsin also held its yearly conference the last week of September in Madison, Wisconsin. It was clearly pointed out at this conference that even though most people are sick of all the politics that takes place all the time, we must stay involved in the political process to make sure that the candidates that we elect do the job that they are elected to do.

Dale J. Blank
Business Manager/Financial Secretary

The process to Recall Scott Walker will kick into high gear in early November of this year. If you wish to be involved in this campaign please contact the Union Hall. Some 550,000+ signatures will be required to start the recall election and I am sure the AFL-CIO will be looking for people to help collect those signatures. Check in the areas where you live to find out where to sign the petition to Recall Scott Walker and ask your family and friends to sign the petition as well.

Stay Safe at work and at play. Enjoy the fall and good luck hunting.

YOURS IN SOLIDARITY,

Dale J. Blank, Business Manager/
Financial Secretary

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It is that time of year again. Kids are back to school, football, hunting, winter knocking at the door, and for several of you negotiations will be taking place between now and the end of the year.

For those in the public sector there is much uncertainty because of the implementation of Wisconsin Acts 10 and 32. The only thing we can negotiate is a base wage rate, and we are limited to one year agreements. The Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission has not published the Certified CPI yet, but they have relayed to us that for contracts that expire on December 31, 2011, the CPI will be 2%. Any base wage increase over that rate would have to go out to a public referendum. With that said the employer is free to unilaterally increase (or decrease) all other forms of compensation. The Act also requires an annual union certification, but not until your current contract expires. For the bargaining units whose contracts expire on December 31, 2011, the Union is required to file an election petition on or before January 30, 2012, with

the members voting prior to May 1, 2012. Remember, none of these new rules take effect until after the expiration of your current contracts. If your employer tries to implement any changes prior to the expiration dates in your contract, please notify the Union Hall immediately.

In closing, I would like to say "Thank You" to all the stewards, committee members, and the rest of the members who have been and will continue to be involved in support of your fellow brothers and sisters. Keep up the good fight and be SAFE!

In Solidarity,
Martin Sandberg
Asst Business Mgr.

Dear Members,

Fall is upon us again, I sure wish spring would arrive as quickly as autumn does.

I would like to remind our members that when the employers that we work for attempt to make changes to the terms and conditions of the contract of which we work under, that you take it serious and report it to the Union. Many of these changes may seem small, but can set precedence or past practices that could have negative effects on the bargaining unit "The Union". Making sure your employer and your co-workers are following the contract, strengthens our position at the table, when it comes time to negotiate a new agreement. Making "Side Deals" with your employer may seem lucrative but in the long run, almost always end up hurting the member and weakening the Union! Doing things above the board and by the contract is ***always*** the best approach. When changes arise, please notify the Union to deal with them ***right the first time!***

Best Wishes & Happy Hunting!
Brady Weiss, Asst. Business Mgr.

Hopefully you have all enjoyed a great summer! From our point of view here at the Local, it was a very busy summer and as we approach Fall and Winter, it appears as if things are only going to get busier.

At present on the Xcel side of business there are 14 grievances either pending or in the process, along with two more issues that are presently awaiting arbitration. On October 3rd, of this year, your Union filed formal charges against Xcel Energy with the National Labor Relations Board. The basis of our complaint is that Xcel Energy engaged in an unfair labor practice within the meaning of Section 8(a), Subsection (1), and Subsection (5), of the National Labor Relations Act. Basically stated, we are asserting that the Company made a unilateral change to the 90 Day Job Search Policy that has since 1992, been afforded to all bargaining unit employees faced with the realization of a disability. As of this writing, testimony has yet to be provided by the Local.

On another matter, this Local was recently made aware of certain disparaging statements allegedly made by representatives of the Northern States Power Company d/b/a/ Xcel Energy with respect to your Union's commitment to safety. That anyone would want to put a bull's eye on the back of your Union is unfortunate. Sadly enough, it seems to be more than apparent that somebody may be looking for a scapegoat.

The truth of the matter is that the Company has a legal responsibility to assure your safety on the job. Even though our responsibility regarding your safety could be considered as being more ethical in nature, our message is, and always has been that your personal safety is of paramount importance and should never be compromised in any way! If you are at work and in doubt, never hesitate to use your stop work authority.

Even though safety may begin with you, the Union also recognizes the important role that

legislation plays in your safety. That is why Union's have historically played a part in attempting to stimulate legislation and OSHA action that will hopefully bring about changes that will better protect your safety and health.

Very recently, in Washington, DC, Rep. Denny Rehberg (R-Mont.) who serves as chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education, introduced cuts to the 2012 budget proposal. If passed, these proposed cuts have the potential to impact the efforts of OSHA and prevent them from moving forward with a prevention program that would require employers to develop plans that would address workplace hazards and reduce injuries. The cuts would also stop the development of a rule that would require employers to record worker's job-related musculoskeletal disorders. So who is really looking out for you?

These same cuts will also stop the National Labor Relations Board from enforcing a good deal of the National Relations Act of which you may be aware, limits the means by which a Company may react to workers in the private sector. (YOU) These proposed cuts are a threat to your Safety and your Union Rights!

Personally, I believe that safety programs have evolved, in part, as a result of the sum of the total loss of life and injury realized by our brothers and sisters who have passed on before us and who unknowingly played a developmental and instrumental part in the evolution of the protections you employ today.

In closing, I pray that none of you ever become part of that equation! Please take care and watch out for each other.

In Solidarity,

Robert J. Lahti
Asst. Business Manager