



## INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS **LOCAL UNION 953 NEWS - JUNE 2011**

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For "Contact Us" link.

### Brothers and Sisters:

As you read this Newsletter the state of Wisconsin is preparing to hold "recall elections" for several Republican State Senators. This is a direct result of Governor Walker's supposed 'Budget Repair Bill' that strips the public employee's rights to collectively bargain. This set of recall elections that will take place in July, in my opinion, will tell a story of what's going to happen in November and December of this year, when it is time to **Recall Walker**.

To everyone who has been involved in any way, either by showing support for all public union employees through protesting or helping get recall petitions signed or any other fashion – *Thank you!* Thank you for trying to stop this race to the bottom!

When I was growing up right here in Wisconsin, my parents always told me, "keep your nose to the grindstone, work hard, and climb the ladder of success to the top!" Not once did they ever say – those people are getting more than you, that's not fair! If that was the case, you figured out what you needed to improve on, so when the opportunity to move up the ladder came along you were prepared.

Unions help this process along by allowing for all its members the ability to climb the ladder of success. Unions are instrumental in making sure that training programs are up to top standards and that its members get the required training that they need to succeed. As a result of this training and education and expertise, it allows your Union, IBEW, Local 953 the ability to negotiate good wages and benefits for all of our members. It is those very wages and benefits that are under attack for our Municipal Union Members. Our fellow Municipal brothers and sisters need our help and support. If you live in one of the districts where there is a recall election taking place make sure that you and your family and friends get out and vote for a "worker friendly" candidate, not for a candidate who things your good wages and benefits "aren't fair". It's time to "STOP THE RACE TO THE BOTTOM!" Stand up, not only for your Union, but do so for your right to earn a good living!

Enjoy your summer, work safe and remember the designated driver when it time to party.

In Solidarity,  
Dale Blank,  
Business Manager/Financial Secretary



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As I write this, the Wisconsin State Supreme Court is deciding if they will take up Scott Walker's Union Bill or not. One step in our favor is that Judge Sumi ruled that there was a violation of the State's open meetings law. This means for now that the bill is stopped. The Republicans want the State Supreme Court to take the case. The Democrats are arguing that the case should go through the normal appeals process and then to the Supreme Court. Either way, this fight could go on for some time. At any time the Senate could decide to revote on this issue, but for some reason has decided not to do that at this point.

Then, there are the recall elections. Currently six Republicans have been approved for recall. The Government Accountability Board is currently deciding if there was fraud or not before approving the three Democrat recalls. Senate Majority Leader, Scott Fitzgerald, is fully endorsing Republicans to run as Democrats. This would force primaries and drag out the elections. The first six elections will take place on July 12, unless there are primaries. Then these elections would be on August 9<sup>th</sup>. If the recalls for the Democrats is approved, those elections would be one week later. Confusing, yeah, they have stated that they hope we are sleeping and don't vote. Maybe they can confuse us enough so that we don't know when to vote.

Politics has never looked more disgusting and fraudulent than it does right now. If you have elections in your area, please, Get Out and Vote! Also, at [unitedwisconsin.com](http://unitedwisconsin.com) you can register your name in their database to recall Scott Walker. This will aid in collecting signatures, which can begin on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. If 540,208 signatures are collected then the paperwork to recall Walker can be filed on January 3, 2012.

To see individuals unite in our communities and across the state is uplifting and inspiring.

We must continue to fight for the rights of all working families if we wish to continue the middle class. Without Solidarity and Unions, this State and Country will regress to a point that we have not seen in decades. We not only fight for our own rights, but for the rights of our children and the generations that will follow. WE ARE ONE!!!!

In Solidarity,  
Martin Sandberg  
Asst. Business Manager

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Hello~

I hope your summer is going well!

Late this spring, after long and difficult negotiations with the contractors meeting in Madison, Eau Claire, and Milwaukee, both Local Union's 953 and Local Union 2150 came to a tentative agreement which was accepted by the membership on May 27, 2011. The package included a general wage increase of 3% the first year and 3-1/4% the second year, along with various contractual language changes. The Union administers its own health insurance plan, which helps us control the raising costs of that particular benefit.

There seems to be a trend in placing more responsibility on the In-Charge positions like Foreman and General Foreman, because of that reason the Union took a pro-active stance and pushed for additional increases for these positions. All totaled, I feel this two year contract with the Missouri Valley Line Constructors (NECA) was a "solid deal".

This summer will start negotiations with many of our Cooperatives with hopes of reaching similar deals. Your City and Municipal workers will continue to suffer the punishment of Scott Walker's anti-worker union busting agenda, unless we step up to the plate "Fight Back" by voting in recall elections and telling our elected officials we support worker's rights and

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collective bargaining, no matter what state you call home!

In closing, a special thanks to all the Union Members at Winona Lighting, who settled their first contract with its new owners Acuity Brands, with a general wage increase of 2-1/2% an excellent contract given the state of the manufacturing sector in the United States.

Let's all work together and make it a safe summer!

Brady Weiss  
Asst. Business Manager

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Well, as I contemplated as of what to write for this newsletter, I did not have to reach out too far. Being that we are only a few days beyond the State of Wisconsin passing the anti-union Budge Bill, a bill that will serve to only help gut public education, create cheap labor as well as assist in the creation of a failing middle class. The people of this state, myself included, should be ashamed of ourselves for allowing legislation like this to even enter into the realm of consideration. But nonetheless, here we are. While they plotted and planned, we slept!

With the understanding that the majority of our membership is utility based, some of you may not have felt the far reaching affects of this legislation. However, should there be any reason of doubt as to the devastating affect that it will have on our public sector members, I encourage that you speak with them. Talk to the teachers in your local school, speak with a state employee. Ask them what affect this bill has or will have on their families. Because, if you have not noticed, they are not the only ones under fire, your pensions, wages, health care and retirement are also under attack. We can no longer afford to live in the past, we are

in a rapidly changing business and political climate that can no longer be considered labor friendly. If we are to have hope, we need to help out. We need to educate our members, they need to educate themselves. We need to get the young people of this local involved. I believe the labor movement as a whole needs to recharge and regenerate itself, invest in its members as well as draw strength and energy from its rank and file. We need to get off our asses and become involved! If we truly want to change things, we need to do it, there is strength in numbers! Please get involved, stay involved and support each other.

In closing, I would like to share a quote that I believe is appropriate given the times we live in.

"Democracy is two wolves and a lamb voting on what to have for lunch. Liberty is a well armed lamb contesting the vote."--Benjamin Franklin

Have a safe and enjoyable summer!

My thanks to you, for all you do!

Robert J. Lahti  
Asst. Business Manager

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**ATTENTION MEMBERS:**

Chippewa Valley Habitat for Humanity has asked IBEW, Local 953 for volunteers to assist with the electrical wiring of a house being constructed on Folsom Street in Eau Claire. The scheduled dates for the project are set up in two Phases: Phase 1 – Rough wire is scheduled for Saturday, July 23 & July 30 (if needed). Phase 2 – Trim & Finish is scheduled for September 17 & September 24 (if needed) All tools, materials and meals will be provided each of the (8) hour days worked. NO EXPERIENCE REQUIRED!

Anyone interested pleased contact Brady Weiss (715) 834-4911 ext. #115