



## INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS **LOCAL UNION 953 NEWS - MARCH 2015**

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For "Contact Us" link.



Hello Brothers and Sisters:

'Right to Work', 'Right to Mooch', 'Right to Freeload'; whatever you want to call it! The Republican Party in the State of Wisconsin has chosen to declare war on all working men and women in the state. They are trying to disguise their attack by saying it's in the best interest of working people to have a choice whether or not they want to join a Union and pay union dues. Give me a break! Everybody already has that choice! They know, or they should know, that the employer that they are seeking a job with is either Union or Non-Union. If you don't want to be Union don't apply for a Union Job! This Bill is just another way for the corporations to hold down the wages and benefits of working people and try to destroy the Unions, while they continue to fill their pockets. Don't fall for it!! As the Unions go down the drain your wages and benefits are going to go with it. Now this may not happen overnight, but it WILL happen. History already shows us that the wages and benefits are significantly less in the Right to Work states. The fight is on!

I will tell you that it costs a lot of money to run and maintain a Local Union and that is why we all pay union dues each month. Some members will complain and say that their union dues are too high and what has the Union done for me? I say to them...."Get out your Union Contract with your employer and take the time to read it and understand it." All the wages, benefits such as; vacation, sick leave, funeral leave, pensions, medical insurance, short term disability, long term disability, overtime, holidays and even a leave of absence, if you need it. Just to mention some of them, along with the working conditions that protect when, where and how you work. All of these things and more have been negotiated into your Union Contracts over the years. Your Union does ensure that all those benefits in your contract stay intact and cannot be changed without your vote. Union Dues is the cheapest insurance policy you will ever have to maintain your Union Contract and your Voice in your workplace.

Speaking of voice, this year's Annual Meeting (notice enclosed) is scheduled for Saturday, April 18, 2015, at the Eau Claire Labor Temple. I will see you there!

**STAY A MEMBER OF YOUR UNION - BE STRONG!**

In Solidarity,

*Dale Blank*

Dale J. Blank,  
Business Manager/Financial Secretary

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Roughly four years after the Governor, his administration, and the Koch brothers went after the public sector Union members and successfully stripped them of their rights to negotiate anything besides wages (of which was capped at the CPI), it should not be a surprise to anyone that the leaders in Madison have now successfully made Wisconsin a Right-To-Work (RTW) State. What amazes me is that during the time of an outright attack on the working people in this great State, they not only survived the Recalls but retained complete control of the Governor's office, the Senate, and the Assembly. The State passing RTW, along with the devastating cuts to the UW system and the public education system, as well as the Governor's other proposed budget items, will set the working people, Union members and non-Union members, in this State back decades. It is clearly Class Warfare and it will eventually lower wages, benefits, and have a negative impact on our working conditions.

RTW has been around since the Taft Hartley Act in 1947. Twenty-four States prior to us have went RTW and studies show that their wages, benefits and working conditions are less than non-RTW States. The Unions have survived in those States and we will survive in Wisconsin. RTW backers talk about the freedom to choose if you want to be a member or not. What they don't tell you is non-members still receive the full benefits of the contract and also receive the benefit of Union representation should they have a grievance. What they don't get is to have a voice by attending meetings, voting on contracts, or electing the Union officials. If you are contemplating becoming a non-member, take out your contract, read it, jot down every benefit that goes with that contract, and remember your brothers and sisters that fought and even died for the right to be a Union member. Ask yourself, where would

wages, benefits, working conditions, and safety be today if the people before us did not unite together to improve their conditions and create a better way of life, not only for themselves but for those of us who came after them.

We must remember the past history of the labor movement and not lose sight of how bad working conditions were. If we do not want to go back to those times, then we need to stay united and take on the present day challenges so that our children and grandchildren may have a future that includes all the benefits that we as Union members have come to enjoy.

While protesting in Madison, one sign left an everlasting impression on me. It is a very simple and true statement that read as follows:

"You already have the RTW, if you don't like Unions, you have the RTW elsewhere!"

In Solidarity,

Martin Sandberg  
Asst. Business Manager

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**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS OF THE ICE FISHING CONTEST & GUN RAFFLE!**

**This year's Ice Fishing Contest was a huge success. There were 82 contestants registered by noon on a relatively warm and sunny February day.**

**Game Fish: 1st Thomas Nickelatti  
2nd Samantha LaRock**

**Pan Fish: 1st Nate Frank  
2nd "Buck" Oliver**

**Gun Raffle: Joshua Brantner**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The only constant in life is change. While not always what we would like, it does cause us to evolve and it is those that decide to meet change head on that eventually rise to the top. The Right to Work law that was recently signed by the Governor of this state presents a challenge to this membership. It is a change from the norm brought on by those who are hell bent on defeating the middle class, while at the same time profiting from and fattening up their bank accounts. It is a challenge whose sole purpose is to take from you those hard earned benefits, working conditions and wages that you are enjoy. Take a good look at your Labor Agreement, because if the other side has its way, that book will be stripped down to a shadow of what it is today. Although our gains have been many, they have not come easy and should not be considered as easily discarded. I believe that the character of this membership is such that each of us will become stronger in our support of your union and each other, knowing full well that our strength come from our numbers.

I firmly believe that this membership will meet this challenge head on, become stronger and grow from the experience. Brothers and Sisters, Martin Luther King once said; "In our glorious fight for civil rights, we must guard against being fooled by false slogans as "right to work. " It provides no "rights" and no "works." Its purpose is to destroy labor unions and the freedom of collective bargaining...We demand this fraud be stopped." The man was right, so don't take what you have for granted, because it could be gone tomorrow!

Wisconsin Works Best When you say "UNION YES"!

In Solidarity,

Robert J. Lahti  
Asst. Business Manager

Dear Members:

This year has begun with another round of anti-union attacks from people who are suppose to be representing all of us. A new Wisconsin (right to work) "for less" law that has been passed looks to weaken our Union unless we stand steadfast against such attempts to destroy Labors ability to negotiate fair contracts and represent working people. Many proponents' of these anti-labor laws say it's about freedom in the work place and people's right to chose if they want to be a Union or not, nothing could be farther from the truth. In fact, if you don't want to be part of a Unionized force and the majority of your co-workers agree, you can vote the Union out. In my almost 10 years working for the Union this rarely if ever happens, because people that pay attention to their career easily understand it's the Union's presence at the workplace which guarantees stability, safety, fair wages, benefits and a voice!

I hope all our members recognize the value of be a part of a Labor Union.

As we move forward into 2015, I have started contract negotiations at Winona Lighting and will soon begin negotiations for our Line Clearance/Tree Agreement if any tree trimmers are interested in setting up a meeting please give me a call, many of you I have already spoken with.

Work Safe!

Brady Weiss  
Asst. Business Manager

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR RIGHT TO WORK**

- 1. What do I need to do to continue to be a Union Member in good standing?**  
*Nothing, continue to pay your union dues as you currently are doing. If your contract allows for automatic dues deduction that does not change.*
- 2. What if I want to quit paying union dues now?**  
*The Law says that until your existing contract expires you must continue to pay your union dues.*
- 3. If I choose to quit paying union dues does that effect my Union Representation?**  
*If you quit paying union dues, you are no longer a Union Member. You cannot attend any type of Union Meeting or function, onsite or offsite. You cannot vote on your contract, elections of officers or have any input into them.*
- 4. Do non-members have the right to file a grievance?**  
*Yes, Unions are required to represent everyone covered under the Collective Bargaining Agreement to ensure that the contract is administered properly. The Union is not allowed to discriminate based on membership status when it comes to pursuing a grievance, but the Union has full control of the grievance and has the ability to pursue or withdraw the grievance at any time.*
- 5. Can the Union post a list of the names of the non-members who quit paying union dues?**  
*Yes, a Supreme Court Decision allows Unions to post a list of people who are not paying Union Dues. The Supreme Court Decision also allows Unions to refer to those individuals as "SCABS" or "FREE LOADERS."*
- 6. Will Right to Work affect future contract negotiations?**  
*The Union Security Clause in the contract will need to be modified. The negotiation process itself does not change and will continue as it has in the past with one exception, non-members cannot and will not have any input into the contract negotiations or ratification process.*
- 7. Will Right to Work cause my dues to increase?**  
*Local 953 is currently financially stable due to the current leadership decision to remain fiscally responsible and within budget. Provided our membership remains strong, we do not see a need anytime in the near future for a dues increase. When we all pay our share and encourage others to do the same we will remain financially sound into the future.*