



INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS **LOCAL UNION 953 NEWS - JULY 2016**

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For "Contact Us" link.



Brothers and Sisters:

The Local Union Elections have been completed and I want to say Congratulations to the Officers and Executive Board Members that were elected. On a personal level, I look forward to working with the entire membership as we move this great Local ahead into the future.

Thank you to Dale Blank, who served the members for the past 6 years as Business Manager and for 11 years prior as an Assistant Business Manager. Dale's service and dedication is much appreciated and we wish him the best as he starts his journey into retirement. Also, special thanks to Steve Burmeister and Tim Henning for their years of service on the Executive Board. Best of wishes to both of you.

The Xcel Energy members were mailed ballots on July 14th to vote on a 3 year extension offer and it came with a full committee recommendation. The ballots will be counted on July 28, 2016.

Contract negotiations will be starting in August at the following Cooperatives: Barron, Eau Claire, and Pierce Pepin. Negotiations for the newly organized Jump River Electric Cooperative remain ongoing. Also, negotiations with Jo Carroll Electric Cooperative will begin in August for the newly organized Sand Prairie Wireless. Several other Distribution Cooperative contracts will be negotiated this fall also. Dairyland Power Cooperative has approached us on negotiations and they are currently looking for dates in October/November. We will be sending out a letter to the DPC stewards regarding this in the near future.

Our Golf Outing this year is scheduled for August 27, 2016, in Mondovi, WI. Please return the enclosed sign-up sheets as soon as possible so we know that we have enough teams to hold the event. This is a great event to participate in and show our Solidarity. I look forward to seeing you there!

In Solidarity,

Martin Sandberg

Business Manager/Financial Secretary

With the beginning of July, so begins another chapter in the history of Local 953 with Martin Sandberg taking over as Business Manager. Having known Marty for many years, the last six as a co-worker, I have seen firsthand the commitment and dedication that he brings to the job on a daily basis, be assured that it is second to none. In going forward, I respectfully request that you provide him with your support and commitment to help him grow as a leader and make this a better Union. My congratulations, as well to the new and returning Executive Board Members, President Tim Hemmenway, Vice President, Brady Weiss and Recording Secretary, Bruce (Pee Wee) Van Berkum.

On Thursday, July 28, 2016, ballots will be counted at Local 160's Hall to determine whether or not the membership accepts or rejects the terms and conditions recently reached with Xcel Energy Management. Some of those Terms are a 3 year renewal of the Agreement with minimal changes to the Health Insurance deductible and a 3 year wage increase of 2.6%, 2.5% and 2.5%.

In closing, stay safe, be advised, follow procedures, and look out for one another.

In Solidarity,

Bob Lahti

Bob Lahti
Asst. Business Manager



Dear Members,

I am happy to report another success story with another newly organized group to our Union. Sand Prairie Wireless in Elizabeth, Illinois which is a subsidiary of Jo-Carroll Energy received voluntary recognition on June 10th to begin the collective bargaining process. This new unit along with the ongoing efforts to secure a first contract at Jump River Electric Cooperative in Northern Wisconsin demonstrates Local Union 953's continued commitment to organize and grow our Union.

As this Summer rolls on, the negotiations process will also. With many contracts open this year, Local 953 will focus on fair settlements at the bargaining table.

Researching and communicating information with the membership is a priority that is key to settling contracts. Please take an active part in the meetings prior and during bargaining. Many times the Union will request information from the membership in various forms, including surveys about conditions they would like to see changed, but sadly in some cases these requests, including meetings, are very poorly attended or returned. It has been my personal experience when our membership is engaged in the process all the time, we settle better agreements, not just when it's time to renew and vote on the contract.

At Winona Lighting, one of our manufacturing plants in Minnesota we are also seeing an increase in production and product lines resulting in an increase in Union membership now with over 130 workers. The Union has negotiated a shift differential pay increase to the last contract for second and third shifts if they are implemented, which is a benefit to these workers.

Stay involved in your Union!

Brady Weiss

Brady Weiss
Asst. Business Mgr

I would like to share an article that I recently came upon while going through Labor Notes. This article is definitely something to think about when it comes to internal organizing.

DON'T BE A HERO

As an organizer, you can't be a superhero or a firefighter. (Even if you are a firefighter.) Your role isn't to knock the door down, burst in, and rescue people; it's to build a team of activists.

Guard against the impulse to put yourself at the center of everything the union is doing. As the great civil rights activist Ella Baker said, we need more movement-centered leaders, not leader-centered movements.

This attitude adjustment can be challenging, since many of us are motivated by a strong sense of injustice. You're outraged at the petty slights the supervisor dishes out. You don't want to let the problem go on a moment longer.

But a good organizer taps into that righteous anger in others, motivates people to take collective action, and gives them the experience of bringing about change together. That's how you build power at work and develop leadership.

This is particularly hard because your co-workers often expect you to be the hero. They are comfortable letting you take all the risks. But they won't learn to help themselves—or help each other—if you do everything for them.

So when a co-worker comes to you with a problem, instead of tying on your cape, look for ways you can help them to get the ball rolling for themselves. Let's not forget, we all need to be organizers in a right to work state.

Sincerely,
Stacey M. Nelson
IBEW Local Union 953, Organizer

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