



## INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS **LOCAL UNION 953 NEWS – DECEMBER 2019**

**May 26, 1919 – May 26, 2019**

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[www.ibew953.org](http://www.ibew953.org)

E-mail Staff, see Web Page  
For "Contact Us" link.



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Another year is about to come to a close with cooler temperatures and a little snow hitting us early this winter. It was a very busy fall at the Union Hall with several bargaining unit contracts due to expire. Many of those have been re-negotiated and approved by the membership. We still have a few to complete before year end.

Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) announced earlier this fall the future closing of their Genoa Coal Plant. The window for this closing is sometime in 2021 thru 2024. They have relayed that the actual closing date will be known sometime in February 2020 or possibly sooner. It is important for the members to realize that if the plant closing was today, the only obligation DPC has under the contract is to honor the seniority and bumping language which means anyone who bumps has to prove they can adequately perform the job within 6 weeks. When an employer announces a plant closing, the Union has the ability to request to bargain over the effects of the closing. We are currently in that process and your committee is working to get the best deal that we can for you. These are always difficult and uncertain times for our members and their families. Further information will be shared with the DPC bargaining unit members as we know more. Should you have questions or comments, please notify myself or one of the committee members.

On November 21<sup>st</sup> the E-Board drew the 5 Local Union Scholarship winners. The winners will be contacted by our office for additional information. The 5 winners, along with the 2 winners from CVTC, are enclosed in this newsletter. Congratulations to the winners and thanks to all of the students who applied for our scholarship drawing. Best of luck to all of you in your studies and your futures.

Prior to you receiving this newsletter, you should have received a gift giveaway from Union Financial. To enter that drawing, please make sure the cards are returned by December 31, 2019. These folks are IBEW members and they are there to help you with any retirement planning needs. We appreciate the expertise and assistance we receive from Union Financial Representative Jess Humpal throughout

the year. If you want him to contact you, make sure you check the appropriate box on the card that you return.

Our annual ice fishing derby is scheduled for February 8, 2020. Registration forms are enclosed. Please fill them out and return them along with the required fee to the Union Hall as soon as possible. It is much easier for us to plan the event when we have a better idea of how many will be attending.

In closing, please have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. As always, STAY SAFE!

In Solidarity,

*Martin Sandberg*

Martin Sandberg  
Business Manager

Hello Fellow Union Members,

It's hard to believe that summer and fall has passed, and winter is here once again. Although for some of us, it's a welcome time of year with hunting season, snowmobiling and ice fishing to look forward to. This Fall has certainly been busy at the Union Hall with multiple negotiations taking place as well as plant closing discussions underway at Dairyland Power Cooperative. It's very unfortunate to put it mildly that some of our members will be negatively impacted at some point in the future. At this point in time the closing date is unknown, but it is our understanding that Dairyland Power Cooperative will have more information in the beginning of next year as to when a potential closing date may be.

Just to go over some of the topics discussed at some of my meetings with the membership this past year. If the situation ever arises where management is requesting your presence at any interview, meeting or phone conversation and you believe that it could lead to discipline, you have a right to have Union Representation and

you must affirmatively request that representation. The Company cannot dictate to you who that representative is if the Steward is not available. This situation has come up at two different electric cooperatives during the current year. These rights are referred to as "Weingarten Rights" and stems from a supreme court case from 1975. So once again you must Request representation first and if none is available request to discontinue the meeting or postpone it until representation (Steward or myself) is available.

Hope to see you all at the Ice Fishing contest this winter. Remember all the military personnel past and present fighting to keep America Great this Holiday Season!

In closing I want to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

In Solidarity,

*Mike Mountin*

Mike Mountin  
Asst. Business Manager

Brothers and Sisters,

Annual enrollment has been taking place at Xcel Energy and I hope everyone took the time to enroll. As always, make sure that everything is accurate and in place.

As most of you know we have a new director in place for workforce relations. We have also had some changes in their staff. As we move forward, we are optimistic that the new leadership will be better to work with and hope to get some of our issues taken care of. However, we need to be patient during this transition. With the new contract in place we will be having meetings with the Company to take care of some longstanding issues. Gas Department clothing and our other Wisconsin Issues will be at the top of the list.

Included with this newsletter, is a list of the 2020 Regional meetings. A copy of the Xcel Energy

Tailgates will be mailed to the stewards. Please make an effort to attend these meetings and get involved.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns please contact me.

Take care and be safe,

In Solidarity,

*Tim Hemenway*

Tim Hemenway

Asst. Business Manager Local 953

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Brothers and Sisters,

As we look forward to spending time with friends and family this holiday season, be sure to take a moment to look back on the year we had. One year ago, I was hired as the Organizer for Local 953. Since then, I am reminded each day why this Union stands above the rest. Overwhelmingly, this is due to the integrity of the brothers and sisters we have the opportunity to work with each day. Throughout the year, we have faced adversity and celebrated victories together. Next year will present its own unique challenges, but our approach will remain constant as a united front. This approach has been and always will be what sets organized labor apart from the rest. Thank you to all who were involved in their own way to advance the interests of fellow brothers and sisters. For generations, the labor movement has worked to ensure workers live a balanced life so be sure to take advantage of that in the coming months with

friends, family and neighbors. As you attend your local holiday festival, connect with friends and family, and sit in the tree stand; take a moment to be thankful for what we have and build hope for the future. For that, is the true *reason for the season*.

*Nick Webber*

Nick Webber

Local 953 Organizer

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Dear Members,

A term that I have heard a lot about recently is Human Performance and if you haven't already been involved with it, my guess is you will be soon. Simply put Human Performance is evaluating oneself for improvements, these days employers are using terms like this on a regular basis, so as a workforce we must understand some of the fundamental reasons behind these tools that managers are using to gauge workers. I believe all top performing organizations must start with leadership that is engaged in all aspects of a successful operation including safety, production, sustainability and profitability.

This starts at the beginning, being careful who gets hired is sometimes out of our control but working with management on things we are concerned about when hiring a new employee is something we can share, along with the challenges of the job, skills and training needs are just some of the things we can remind hiring leaders about. Sometimes we just assume they know all aspects of our work, but it never hurts to make our concerns known. Next, we need to try and build a personal relationship with our coworkers, in many cases we spend more time with them than our families. Again, this relates to the human side of our working environment, which builds on one of the cornerstones of any relationship which is trust. After establishing this we can move on to clearly articulating what the goals and responsibilities are, in a crew setting or factory floor everyone needs to know these principals.

Offering to help those who aren't performing well is something that is often missed. These days people don't want to offend their coworkers or in some cases workers that need assistance won't ask until it's too late and are fired or disciplined. This is especially important when training apprentices. On the same token we need to spot and encourage star employees that are great performers, this can be as simple as telling them good job, or other rewards.



No employee wants to be stuck in the past, so creating a forward thinking environment, which gives people the freedom to make their own choices is something that management often struggles with, but studies are clear that when people are given a task and guidelines they are much more likely to reach their goals when not being micromanaged. Encourage team or crew-based work methods, this will increase collaboration. Don't rely on assigning tasks to the same person, rotate duties when assigning work.

Promoting open and direct communication while keeping the job interesting and fun is the challenge of our foreman and leaders. Let's try and help them on a daily basis and not get burned-out performing the job all of us are here to do safely and on time.

Thanks

*Brady Weiss*

Brady Weiss

Asst. Business Manager



***Congratulations to this year's IBEW Local 953 Scholarship Winners!***

**Winners of Local 953 Scholarship:**

Austin Kopacz, son of Mark Kopacz (Xcel Energy)  
 Ashley Kopacz, daughter of Mark Kopacz (Xcel)  
 Katy Mislivecek, daughter of Julie Mislivecek (Xcel)  
 Kayla Dubiel, daughter of Kristopher Dubiel (ECEC)  
 Kylie Hodnefield, daughter of Kirk Hodnefield (Xcel)

**Winners of CVTC Scholarships:**

Micah Crotty: Gas Utility Construction & Service  
 Levi Gage: Electrical Power Distribution Program

**MEMBERSHIP NOTICE**

**IBEW PER CAPITA – 2020**

As per the IBEW Convention vote of September 2016; Per Capita Dues for "A" Membership will increase by \$1.00 as of January 1, 2020, as follows:

"A" Members \$39.00 per month

"BA" Members \$20.00 per month

*Please add the \$1.00 increase to your monthly dues when you pay dues for January 2020.*

*Thank you!*



**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**

*From the Officers and Staff of Local 953*

*Marty, Tim, Brady, Mike, Nick,  
 Grace and Connie*