



INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS
LOCAL UNION 953 NEWS – FEBRUARY 2020

May 26, 1919 – May 26, 2019

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For "Contact Us" link.



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In the last newsletter I referenced that Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) had given us notice that they would likely be closing Genoa 3, with a timeframe of sometime in 2021-2024. On January 23rd, DPC notified the Union Hall and their employees that the plant closure would occur in mid to late 2021. We started bargaining the effects of the closure during the fall of 2019, but we requested to put those meetings on hold until such time that DPC could give us a closure date or a narrower timeframe for the expected closure. Now that DPC has given us a known date or window, the parties will reconvene bargaining on February 11, 2020. Also, we have dates reserved on February 25, 26, and 27. Many of our members lives will be negatively affected by this closure and I would ask that we remember to be respectful toward each other as we move forward with our discussions and the closure. There will not be one answer that achieves what each of you would like to see, but your committee will continue to work hard for you. Whether it is this plant closing or something else you are dealing with, please remember to keep your minds on the tasks you are performing so that everyone will go home safely.

Annual Meeting: The Annual Meeting is scheduled for March 21, 2020 at the Brickhouse Pub & Hub (Labor Temple). Address: 2233 Birch St., Eau Claire, WI 54703. The meeting starts at 9 a.m. and continues until all business is concluded. Hopefully we have a great attendance by the membership, and we look forward to seeing each of you.

Solidarity Event: The Ice Fishing Contest is being held on February 8, 2020, which is during the time that this letter went to the printers, therefore the winners will be listed in the next newsletter. Thank you to Union Financial (Jess Humpal) for his donations towards food and beverages and also to American Income Life for the prize donations.

In closing, thank you to all of the stewards, committee members, and all the members who assisted us throughout the past year and we look forward to not only working with you, but for you, as we move forward into 2020 and beyond.

In Solidarity,

Martin D. Sandberg

Martin Sandberg

Business Manager

Hello Fellow Union Members,

As we head into the new year, I would like to acknowledge and say thanks to all of you who participated in amendment meetings as well as those who were involved directly in the negotiation process last year. We had a large number of contracts that were set to expire in 2019 and successor agreements have been reached at all of them. The average wage increases last year for the outside Cooperative units we represent was roughly 3% per year with some added fringe benefits and no takeaways. We were able to secure multi-year agreements at all the Cooperatives we represent aside from Riverland Energy where we were only able to reach a one-year agreement. That means we will be back at the table later this year to have another go at trying to secure another fair and equitable wage increase and a longer-term contract like we have been able to achieve at all the other Cooperatives we represent.

I just wanted to touch on something that came to light while I was involved in negotiations at the various Cooperatives last year that I found very interesting. It's something I never really thought much about while working in the field as a Union employee. It relates to how Unions have a substantial impact on the compensation and benefits of our non-union counterparts, in a positive way. Now to some of you that may be disappointing, but I think all in all it's a good thing. It wasn't until I began working as a Rep in Local 953 and was exposed to the negotiation process that I realized that the Pensions, Vacation/PTO and Health Insurance of the non-union employees is identical or very close to that which our Union members have. I'd bet that most of them probably never put much thought into that themselves. I think it's safe to say that they would not receive those benefits if not for the Union and its members who joined together to improve the common interests of workers. So, whether it's serving our country or paying your dues, in either case we won't survive for long without everyone carrying their fair share of the load so we can continue to improve the lives of us all!

Good luck and have fun at the Ice Fishing Contest...
Hopefully it will be a bit warmer this year!

In Solidarity,

Mike Mountain

Mike Mountain
Assistant Business Manager

Brothers and Sisters,

Hopefully the holidays went well for you and your families. As the New Year has started, we have had some changes here at Xcel Energy. As most of you are aware, new Sick Leave rules have been negotiated. This was a result of a change in legislation in Minnesota. This will be a significant benefit to our new employee's as well as our existing employee's. Copies of the new changes have been mailed to the Stewards.

As part of our newly negotiated contract, we are presently working with the Company to resolve the Gas Clothing piece. We are close on having an agreement and hope to have details soon.

Most of you, especially in the Gas and Line Departments, know we are in the middle of a Gas Management Reorganization. Basically, as a result, the Gas Employee's will report to only Gas Management and Line Department Employee's will report only to Line Management. We were told that this reorganization would be in place by the first of April. As we move forward, we ask that all involved be patient and help with this transition.

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

Take care and be safe,

In Solidarity,

Tim Hemenway

Tim Hemenway
Assistant Business Manager

Brothers and Sisters,

I hope the new year has treated you well so far. As always, it is my hope to see many of you at meetings, or on the job soon. I am certain many of us have made personal and professional resolutions for the upcoming year. I wish you the best of luck in those endeavors!

One goal for the upcoming year for our Union is to prioritize internal organizing, and it will take all of us to get the job done. Internal organizing, much like external organizing, is no more than a simple conversation about Union membership. Each day, when talking with future members we emphasize the benefits of belonging to a Union, including the ability to be involved in an organization intended to improve the lives of them and their families.

The opportunity to assemble with these intentions is one of our greatest assets as an organization.

Having conversations about Union membership is not only reserved for those who have yet to join our organization, as these discussions are necessary internally to preserve and grow the strength of our Union. Each day, we all have an opportunity to build strength through internal organizing. Whether it is inviting co-workers to Union meetings, attending events or having a simple conversation; these actions are critical to the power of our Union.

Talking with fellow members about the importance of Union involvement is a task we all must prioritize in the coming year. Through building solidarity, we maximize value for our fellow members.

Additionally, I am interested in hearing your ideas on how to step up our game when it comes to internal organizing. What additional opportunities can we take advantage of in your workplace?

Feel free to reach out at any time, I would be happy to execute a plan together.

In Solidarity,

Nick Webber

Nick Webber

Dear Members,

I wanted to give an update on a potential large power line in our area call the Cardinal-Hickory Creek Project, which is a high-voltage transmission line in Southwest Wisconsin. Proposed by American Transmission Company, ITC Midwest, and Dairyland Power, this line would connect a 345 Kilovolt line between Northeast Iowa and Southern Wisconsin increasing system reliability and tapping more wind energy and other renewable energies produced in the region to utilities and electric energy users.

This project consists of approximately 105 miles of transmission line to be built on new and existing power line right-of-way from Dubuque County IA to Dane County WI. This project will require a great deal of skilled labor to complete, which will again give the IBEW an opportunity to showcase its abilities to be the workforce of choice for projects of this magnitude. Beginning with right-of-way clearing to the construction of the line itself, the IBEW and your Local Union are up to the challenge. The in-service date for this project is 2023.

I will give an update on this at our Annual Meeting set for Saturday, March 21st at 9:00 AM at the Labor Temple in Eau Claire. Hope to see you there!

Best Regards,

Brady Weiss

Brady Weiss

*NOTICE TO ALL
LOCAL UNION 953 MEMBERS*

ANNUAL MEETING

SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 2020

9:00 AM

*EAU CLAIRE LABOR TEMPLE
2233 BIRCH STREET
EAU CLAIRE, WISCONSIN*

*THE MEETING IS FOR ALL MEMBERS.
HAVE A VOICE IN YOUR UNION!*

*THE AGENDA WILL INCLUDE
THE ELECTRICAL WORKERS CLUB &
LOCAL UNION BY-LAWS MEETINGS*

COFFEE, JUICE & ROLLS FURNISHED PRIOR TO THE MEETINGS!