



## INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS LOCAL UNION 953 NEWS – JUNE 2020

May 26, 1919 – May 26, 2019

### LOCAL OFFICERS

#### MARTIN D. SANDBERG

Business Manager &  
Financial Secretary

#### MICHAEL D. MITCHELL

President

#### BRADY L. WEISS

Vice President

#### MITCHELL W. BARKA

Recording Secretary

#### FREDERICK A. HINES

Treasurer

### EXECUTIVE BOARD

Aaron J. Boos

Peter J. Boos

Joseph S. Haley

Brad W. Honish

Cory J. Tomac

### OFFICE STAFF

Brady Weiss, Asst. Bus. Mgr

Timothy Hemenway, Asst. Bus Mgr

Michael Mountin, Asst. Bus. Mgr

Nick Webber, Organizer

Connie Bremer, Office Mgr

Grace Malone, Accountant

### OUR ADDRESS

2206 Highland Avenue

Eau Claire, WI 54701

TEL: 715-834-4911

### INTERNET WEB PAGE

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

E-mail Staff, see Web Page

For "Contact Us" link.



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This year has brought new challenges for all of us with the pandemic and all the protests. In January, due to our old computer system and security issues, the Union Hall updated our computer software to Windows 10, Microsoft 365, and Roberts Custom Software for the financial program. Little did we know at that time, but those upgrades have proved very beneficial during the pandemic. The upgrades allowed us full access to all our programs remotely. This meant that if individuals had to be out of the office, they could still perform their work as normal. It also taught some of us how to use Business Skype and Teams, which can be a better option than just a conference call.

During the past few months, our office doors have been closed to walk-ins and our meetings cancelled. Our construction folks were required to initially sign the books in person the first month and remotely every 30 days. We temporarily changed this process. Through working with Connie and Grace they were allowed to sign up through the use of emails or fax. We are looking to go back to normal beginning in July. I would ask that you still call ahead before showing up at the Union Hall should something else happen between now and then. We are also planning on reconvening our meeting schedules at the beginning of July.

The pandemic is not over, and we will likely be dealing with it until a vaccine comes out. In an effort to do our part, we are working on a plan for reconvening our meetings. Being discussed is checking temperatures before entering meeting and masks as optional. We will follow CDC guidelines on temps to determine if you are allowed to attend or not.

Our Annual Meeting was initially scheduled for late March and as you are aware, we had to postpone that. Besides conducting our normal business and reports, we have to hold the meeting to get the scholarships approved for this year. The annual meeting is scheduled for July 18, 2020 at 9 a.m. at The Brickhouse (Labor Temple) in Eau Claire. If for some reason they are not open, we will move the meeting to the basement at the Union Hall. Temps will be checked at the door and masks optional. To the best of our ability we will try and maintain the recommended six feet between attendees. Obviously, this is easier to do if we can have it at the Labor Temple verses the Union Hall.

I also want to briefly mention the unfortunate incident that occurred in the Cities of which has resulted in many protests across the nation. The IBEW has a Code of Excellence of which we follow. Besides your code of conduct at the

places you work, Local Union 953 also has discrimination and harassment policies. Everything you post on your phone or computer is out there for everybody to see. You can also expect that at any time you are probably on someone's video. Sometimes these things even get forwarded by others to the Union Hall. I want to be clear, Local 953 does not condone harassment or discrimination of any kind. How we act, what we say, and how we treat others is of utmost importance!

In closing, I truly hope you and your families are staying safe and healthy.

In Solidarity,

*Martin D. Sandberg*

Martin Sandberg  
Business Manager

---

Brothers and Sisters,

I think it's safe to say, 2020 will be a year that we will not forget for some time. The Local Unions that represent Xcel Energy North have had, and will continue to have, conversations about our jobs and how the pandemic has affected them. For several months, temporary agreements were put in place to protect our members the best way possible. As of June 1<sup>st</sup>, a majority of those agreements expired. I want all of you to know that we worked hard to extend some of these but were unsuccessful. One agreement, the Temporary Sick Leave Letter of Understanding, is still in effect. This is an important one because as most of us know, the virus is not gone. Moving forward there will be issues that arrive involving the Corona Virus. We will be working with the Company to address these as they present themselves. I ask all our members to be safe and patient as we move through these difficult times.

Regional Meetings and Tailgates have been cancelled since the end of March. I am hoping that we can start these up again in July.

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

Hello Fellow Union Members,

As you are all well aware the recent Pandemic has altered our lives and the way we do business, for some more than others. There have been various procedures put in place at the utilities to try and minimize transmission if an employee were to be infected with Covid-19. For the most part things have gone well in dealings with Cooperative Management aside from a few issues which is bound to be the case. The office here at the Union hall has been closed as well to safeguard against exposure but the job of representing the members and dealing with issues as they arise has not been affected.

Negotiations are set to take place at Polk Burnett Electric Cooperative later this month. Clark Electric and St. Croix Electric Cooperative have contracts that are up as well later this year, as well as the expiration of a one-year agreement at Riverland Energy Cooperative. With restrictions easing for larger gatherings I look forward to getting out and meeting with the members in person soon. In the meantime, I am sure you will all be busy with storm season upon us. I will be in touch with the Stewards at the units I represent to start scheduling some tailgates soon. Stay safe and healthy and enjoy the nice weather. Lord knows it will not be here for long!

In Solidarity,

*Mike Mountin*

Mike Mountin  
Assistant Business Manager

---

**STAY SAFE!**

Brothers and Sisters,

Needless to say, 2020 is not what we expected it to be. In a matter of months, we have seen communities come together at a moment's notice to protect the safety of our most vulnerable and have witnessed communities torn apart as we all contemplate our basic understanding of justice. At one point or another, we have all been challenged personally and professionally during this period, which in itself, is extraordinary. The work that IBEW Local 953 members performed during this time played a critical role in keeping our communities safe and stable. Though at times it seems we are unsung heroes, we all know our communities would look much different without us out there every day. As we reflect on our last few months, we must also look to the future, the time we have left. These are historic times, that will be a topic of conversation for years to come. Make sure you are comfortable where you stand today, because you will certainly have to defend it in the tomorrow.

Organizing has looked different this year, but despite social and physical limitations we have had a successful Spring. Our work over the past couple of years working on capturing market share in telecommunication construction is paying off, giving our newest brothers and sisters the opportunity to see the Union difference while working under a collective bargaining agreement. As this has been happening, non-union contractors have taken notice. Productive conversations are taking place with contractors that are critical to building a relationship of trust needed to be signatory with this Union. Along with this, manufacturing workers in the area have begun reaching out and beginning conversations of their own. I am looking forward to working with them to accomplish their goals in the workplace. As always, send organizing targets my way. Until I see you again- be safe and be well.

Fraternally,

*Nick Webber*

Nick Webber, Organizer

Dear Members,

2020 has been one of the most challenging years in history beginning with a worldwide pandemic that has affected every person in America. Local 953 has diligently worked with all our members to address employment issues the likes that have never been seen in modern history. With the inability to hold regular meetings and using alternative forms of communications, Local 953 leaned on technology to continue to service our membership. Things like text messaging, phone conferences, online meetings, and social media have replaced face to face meetings. I am happy to report Local 953 has done a good job in the past of upgrading and replacing office equipment including computers and cell phones that has helped us adapt and function during these unprecedented times.

The Covid-19 pandemic has also created a great strain on our members with the closure of schools, unessential business, social distancing and other measures to slow the spread of this disease has presented great challenges. The Union has worked tirelessly with our employers to address the changes imposed to our members in an effort to keep you and your family safe.

More recently social unrest has dominated the news headlines, many people especially those in large cities are feeling the pain of decades of struggles, due in no small part of the fact that much of the stability of American's manufacturing base has been outsourced over the last 30 years leaving a trail of destruction along the way. Trade agreements supported by both political parties like NAFTA and alike have sold workers down the road. Protesters and demonstrators are seeking equality and fairness, which are the corner stones of a Union Contract. I believe where Union density is strong people have the upward mobility to earn a living and raise a family in a safe environment. America's middle class must include everyone regardless of skin color, worship, or who you choose to spend your life with. The only way to uphold a free society is the stand up against racism and bigotry, sometimes doing what is right is not what is popular.

Best Regards,

*Brady Weiss*

Brady Weiss, Asst. Business Mgr.

NOTICE TO ALL  
LOCAL UNION 953 MEMBERS

---

# ANNUAL MEETING

SATURDAY, JULY 18, 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

---

*Temperatures will be taken at the door and masks will be available  
for those that want them.*