

Service

Safety

Quality

AUGUST, 2009

the Block

C O N N E C T I O N

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The following are letters we received from some of the recipients of the Block Electric 2009-2010 Scholarship Awards

A letter from Elizabeth Brauneis

I'd like to greatly thank you for presenting me with the Block Electric Company's scholarship for the 2009-2010 school year. Without the help from you and the company, my educational goals of becoming a teacher would not be possible. I cannot thank you enough.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

- JACK BLOCK

It's darn tough out there! I won't lie to anyone. Construction in our area is down 72% from last year. We are doing everything we can to keep in the race, but sometimes it seems like we are competing with every contractor who has a license. We will hang in there. Fortunately, we are a strong firm with strong, dedicated and talented people. We have been here before and have always run our business as if this economy would reset itself. We believe in being a conservatively run business. We are dedicated to the successes of our projects. We are dedicated to working with quality people and quality customers. We are determined to make the construction experience as *delightful* as possible. I have seen a lot of bidding wars in my days, but the one we are going through now is really tough. It seems that contractors are pricing their bids so far below cost that only outright cheating and change order price gouging will allow them to break even....maybe.

It has never been our practice or policy to participate in price wars that result in an inappropriate project cost or bid. This strategy only leads to unhappy customers and an unhappy workforce. This is not a positive experience for anyone. So where does that leave us. We will survive, we will endure, but it's going to be tough sledding for a while. Luckily we have many customers and relationships that understand there is no free lunch in construction. The market will change and we want to be around with a great reputation to go forward. It is more than I can say for some of our competitors. So all I can say at this point is, let's hang in there, do the best job we can and keep our customers *delighted*. Things will turn and we will be around to see it happen!

A letter from
Kathryn Vignocchi

I reply with extreme gratitude for your generous investments towards my higher education. It's rewarding to know that you saw enough potential in my essay to help me financially. I'm excited to pursue the next four years of my college career in Civil Engineering. This past year, I have carefully viewed every possible path and believe I am headed in a successful direction. I thank you again for choosing to award me with the Block Electric Scholarship for this academic year.

A letter from
George Brauneis IV

I am greatly honored to receive the Block Electric Scholarship. By receiving the scholarship I am able to achieve the educational pursuits I am striving for. I would like to thank you for choosing me for your scholarship as it is truly beneficial to me.

GOING GREEN

- MIKE DEGER

The following excerpt is taken from an article in the [Intelegencer.com](http://theintelligencer.com)

"When the Illinois House and Senate passed SB2150 and sent it to Gov. Quinn on June 17 for his signature to enact it into law, the legislators of the State of Illinois had taken a major step forward in "green" energy initiatives. The passage of the bill was also the signal that the state would soon become a player in the solar energy market.

This past week an Edwardsville business, Day and Night Solar, showed that it would be a major player in the State's solar energy market as it hosted training for more than a dozen people from around the country who travelled here to become certified solar system installers.

Once signed, SB2150 will require that six percent of the State's electricity come from renewable energy sources — solar power — by 2015.

Although the bill still awaits Quinn's signature, its expected enactment will be a huge step forward for a state that is the fourth largest electricity user in the U.S. and the consumer of one percent of the world's energy. "

Thomas Cawley, an instructor for the training course, teaches alternative energy courses at Mira Costa College in California, a leading community college in alternative energy programs. He explained how unique the certification was but how many, many more installers are needed across the country.

Bob Eaton, owner of Day and Night Solar, felt providing the NABCEP certification course was a critical part of moving the industry forward. "We're about educating," he said. "The key is putting them (the systems) in correctly."

Cawley agreed wholeheartedly about the importance of education and certification. After experiencing the explosion of solar energy throughout the state of California, he also sees a bigger picture of not only what solar energy can do to save residents and businesses money, but what it can do to help the economy.

What does this have to do with us? Steve Sansone attended the training and will be a certified solar installer. We will be working with Day and Night Solar on future solar installations in the Chicagoland area. With the state and federal government incentives now available the solar market is poised to take off. Additional certified installers will be needed. The IBEW-NECA Technical Institute offers PV classes. You should have received your brochure this month. If you are interested in working on PV systems sign up for the class. Only NABCEP certified installers will be able to work on these systems.

To read the complete article go to http://theintelligencer.com/articles/2009/07/21/local_news/doc4a612906cbbc4632805116.txt

To sign up for classes at IN-Tech got to www.ejatt.com.

HEAT STRESS—A SUMMERTIME HAZARD

- DREW BOYCE

Summer is here, and people who do roofing work, road repair, construction, landscaping, or other physically demanding jobs are probably exposed to hot and humid conditions! Being uncomfortable is not the major problem when working in high temperatures. Varying degrees of heat stress may also be suffered, increasing the potential for accidents. The human body maintains a fairly constant internal temperature. When we become overheated, several reactions take place. First, the body rids itself of excess heat by increasing circulation in blood vessels close to the surface of your skin. This is why your face and hands turn red when you begin to overheat. Your brain may also signal your sweat glands to work harder. As the sweat evaporates, it cools the skin and removes large quantities of heat from your body.

Problems begin when outside temperatures are near your body temperature (98 degrees F.). If the air temperature around you is warmer than your skin, blood that has been brought to the body surface cannot lose its heat. Also, if the humidity is high, your body will continue to sweat liquids containing electrolytes, but will not easily evaporate. Therefore, you can't rid yourself of the excess heat that is building up. With so much blood being sent to the outer surface of your body, less is available for active muscles, your brain, and other internal organs. The following reactions take place:

- Your strength declines;
- Fatigue occurs sooner than it would otherwise;
- Alertness and mental capacity may also be affected. Workers who must perform delicate or detailed work may find they are less accurate. Others may find they have less ability to understand and retain information. The problem is, you may not realize this is happening.

Heat stress may also produce *heat cramps* (the internal organs are not getting enough electrolytes due to profuse sweating). It may bring on *heat exhaustion* (caused by insufficient water intake and not being able to evaporate the sweat). Or, you may suffer *heat stroke*, which is when your body shuts down in an attempt to keep its internal organs from burning up. Without emergency treatment, the heat stroke victim lapses into shock, then a coma and death may follow.

To control heat stress, remember these tips:

- Use ventilation or local cooling fans to increase air movement over your body and promote skin evaporation.
- Take frequent rest breaks between strenuous work activities.
- Wear protective clothing, such as loose cotton or heat reflective clothes.
- Drink plenty of liquids to replenish your fluid loss.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which also cause an expansion of blood vessels and may bring on flushing, dizziness or fainting.

Keep Cool! Your brain—and perhaps your life—depends upon it!

*A letter from
Bridget Hughes*

*I really appreciate
the generous col-
lege scholarship
that you granted
me this year. It will
tremendously help
with the cost of my
education.*

*A letter from
Nadine Arvesen*

*Thank you so much
for your generosity,
I know times are
tough in the world
today and this gift
will help keep
down the cost and
allow me to
continue my
education.*

*A letter from
Andrew Hughes*

*Please accept my
sincerest gratitude
and thanks for the
generous scholar-
ship.*

Block Electric Company is an
Equal Opportunity Employer

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We're on the web!
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Life Lessons

- Life isn't fair, but it's still good.
- You don't have to win every argument - agree to disagree.
- When it comes to chocolate, resistance is futile.
- Make peace with your past so it won't screw up the present.
- Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.
- Take a deep breath. It calms the mind.
- Whatever doesn't kill you really does make you stronger.

BIRTHDAYS

Ryan	McAlilly	08/03
Ted	Madson	08/04
Brian	Ziarko	08/06
Rick	Fliger	08/08
Jerry	Hughes	08/10
Tom	Dimopoulos	08/20
Jeff	Keltz	08/27
Vince	Generoso	08/28
John	Lattz	08/28
Jim	McCormick	08/29



NEW EMPLOYEES

Welcome to the new kid on the Block team.

Michael Smith

TEA TIME! IT'S GOOD FOR YOU

Drinking three cups of tea a day can have important health benefits, according to doctors and researchers. Among its potential advantages, tea may help in these areas:

- **Cancer.** Tea, especially the green variety, has been shown in some studies to be linked to a decreased risk of breast cancer, as well as prostate and other cancers.
- **Obesity.** Some studies with animals have suggested that green tea and oolong tea may contribute to better weight management.
- **Brain activity.** Green tea (again!) may help prevent cognitive impairment among older people, as suggested by some epidemiological studies.
- **Heart disease.** Antioxidants in tea can help the body better regulate its insulin production, which can aid in preventing diabetes and heart disease. In addition, tea can reduce risk factors such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

DO THESE FACTORS ADD UP TO BILLIONS?

Are you destined to become a billionaire? Forbes magazine conducted an informal, unscientific analysis of its list of self-made billionaires and noted a few common denominators:

- **Math skills.** A lot of the world's wealthiest people show a high aptitude for math. Many of their parents had math-related careers such as engineering or accounting.
- **Birth date.** More billionaires were born in the fall than in any other season. September was the most common month of birth for the 380 self-made American billionaires who appeared on the Forbes list in the past three years. What does this mean? Nobody knows. Maybe it's the magic of mistletoe.
- **College.** Higher education isn't necessarily a requirement for vast wealth. Of the 292 Horatio Algiers on Forbes' most recent list, 20 percent either didn't complete college or never bothered with it in the first place.
- **Failure.** Forbes notes that several of the billionaires on its list failed to score on their first attempt. Some of their first attempts at business were disastrous—but they learned from their failures and now view them as a necessary step to their eventual success.