

Service

Safety

Quality



DECEMBER, 2008

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

- JACK BLOCK

This is my last newsletter for the year...Thank God! I am so ready to move on to 2009. I wake up each day and think that things have to start turning around for this economy. We have a new President and many new faces in Congress. Regardless of our political views, President-elect Obama deserves our support. Hopefully, his advisors will be brighter, broader in depth, and more capable of working through the issues facing this nation than the last administration. I believe change is inevitable. We will have change, like it or not.

Block Electric is very fortunate to have work. There are a lot of contractors on their backs right now. Things definitely have slowed down in Will County, but after a slow start to the year, we are moving forward in Cook County.

Many of you may be asking yourself what is my part in this national mess? There really isn't a definitive answer. We just have to stay with our core principles. Service the heck out of our customers. Work efficiently, safely and with "**Customer Delight.**" We are not a global company, but we are seeing the effects of a global economy.

We can only do our best in our local market. We will be as aggressive as possible with our bidding and the rest is up to our customers. Opportunities for Block Electric to work on future projects will be there if we continue to bring a positive outcome to our customers. If we fall into the category of "same as everybody else" then the only thing we have to sell is low prices. That is the worst thing we can do in a slow market. It is a recipe for disaster.

That's why "**Customer Delight**" is so important. No matter how tough the project is and no matter how impossible or unorganized the customers may seem, there is only one way out. It's by providing a positive experience with a positive attitude that will make us different. That's what will get us future work and repeat customers. That's what insures our survival. For most of you this has become paramount. For some of us it is just words. We have to believe it and we have to live it!

This is a special month and I want to wish everyone and their families the merriest and happiest of Holidays. So to all of you I say Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a very Happy New Year.

OURSTOPROTECT.COM

- MIKE DEGER

Have you visited the above website yet? This website is dedicated to preserving union electrical construction in Chicago. We all have a serious stake in preserving our work. Whether you're a new apprentice or ready to retire this matters to you. You're working now building a pension. Someday you will want to retire with a full pension and health benefits as you have been promised. But that promise is only good if the union electrical construction industry remains viable.

As a member you receive Annual Funding Notices from EIT and NEBF. Read these carefully. Buried in the information is always a sentence such as this from the 2008 NEBF report: "the Plan's assets could provide for approximately 15.75 years of benefits payments..." I don't know about you but I plan to live for more than 15.75 years after I retire.

So how do we collect our pensions if the plan has only 15.75 years of reserves? (Which I bet is much less due to the current market fiasco.) The people who are working now and in the future must keep making contributions into the plans. Non-union workers and employers do not contribute to these funds!

Please visit the WEB site. Visit it often. It is new and will be ever evolving. New stories and contributions will be added as more information is gathered. If you see non-union projects you can report them in the contacts section. Fill out the Visitors Survey. It will help shape the evolution of the site. This is a first step in protecting you and your family's future.

CUSTOMER DELIGHT

A letter sent to Jim McCormick from Aimee Castro, Project Engineer at Gilbane Building Company on the Joliet West Field House project.

I just received the most heartwarming thanks from your foreman Scott Schultz at the West Field House project. He called me just to say that it was a pleasure to work with myself, Larry Hogue, and the rest of the Gilbane project team. I have to say, Scott has been by far the best electrician that I have ever worked with in all of my years in this business. He never complained when asked to go above and beyond his duties and I appreciate that. He always offered suggestions instead of just pointing out the problems. I hope to work with him again sometime. Larry Hogue, our Superintendent, mentioned that he didn't think there was a sub on the project that did not get along with Scott and that he was very easy to work with all around. Anyway, I just wanted to point that out to you. He clearly was a joy to work with. Thank you.

SAFETY WITH TEMPORARY HEATING DEVICES

- DREW BOYCE

Temporary heating devices are a vital part of cold weather work. They allow temperature-critical work to continue on schedule, and provide for more comfortable working conditions. However, as a result of poor selection or careless use of portable heaters, injuries and damaging fires occur every year. If improperly used, temporary heating equipment can lead to burns, fires, explosion, carbon monoxide poisoning, and the creation of oxygen deficient atmospheres. It is important to review the many types of temporary heating devices that are available and their proper use.

A variety of devices to choose from: Temporary heat units can be fired either directly or indirectly. They can be electric or fueled by: (1) Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG or propane), (2) Natural Gas, (3) Liquid Fuel (kerosene, fuel oil, coal oil, and some diesel oils) or, (4) Solid fuel (wood, coal, coke, etc.). Solid fuel heaters are the most uncontrollable and therefore most potentially dangerous. Because of the inherent hazards associated with solid fuel, temporary units can not be used inside or within 25' of any building or structure. This safety requirement makes their use for most temporary heating situations impractical.

Always follow safety guidelines: The *most important* instructions will be found on the side of the heating unit, though instructions will not be the same for all equipment. What was safe to use in one location may not be so in another. Remember the old saying, "When in doubt, read the instructions." This is critical advice when using heating equipment, to avoid creating a hazard.

Other important tips:

1. Never use a "fueled" heater within 10' of any debris piles, temporary enclosures, tarps, combustible materials, or flammable materials.
2. Maintain a good fresh air supply, to avoid oxygen deficient atmospheres; flame uses oxygen.
3. Every heating unit must have a fire extinguisher immediately available.
4. Never leave an operating heater unattended during non-working hours.
5. The use of temporary heaters in confined spaces is never recommended; when they are used, sufficient ventilation and temperature control must be provided.
6. Allow the heater to cool down before it is re-fueled.
7. When the heater is not in use, always turn off the gas supply.
8. Never store used or extra LPG containers inside. Only those in use should be present.
9. Temporary heaters should be placed at *least* 6' away from the LPG container and not fired toward the container, unless the heater is an approved integrated unit.
10. LP cylinders must be secured in the upright position and protected from damage.

Never use LPG below grade level: Be aware that gases such as propane are heavier-than-air, and will settle into any low spots, such as a basement. If there is no way for these gases to exit, a spark or flame can ignite and explode the concentration of gas, causing great damage and injuries. Temporary heaters are great tools, allowing work to continue in cold and damp weather. But remember, they can be dangerous. Learn how to operate them, and don't take them for granted.

Stay Warm, But Stay Safe!

Let's have a safe and Happy Holiday Season.

Block Electric Company is an
Equal Opportunity Employer

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We're on the web!
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Christmas Holiday Trivia

- * Electric lights for trees were first used in 1895.
- * The first Christmas cards were vintage and invented in 1843, the Victorian Era.
- * Montgomery Ward in the late 1930's for a holiday promotion. The rest is history.
- * The Nutcracker is the most famous Christmas ballet.
- * The first state to recognize the Christmas holiday officially was Alabama
- * Christmas became a national holiday in America on June 26, 1870.
- * Coca Cola was the first beverage company to use Santa for a winter promotion.
- * More diamonds are sold around Christmas than any other time of the year.

BIRTHDAYS

Bob	Mundzic	12/02
Holly	Iversen	12/04
Bob	Koehler	12/05
Bill	Wills	12/09
Mike	Vasquez	12/12
John	Barton	12/14
John	Devers	12/15
Mike	Asquini	12/16
Brian	Cerny	12/16
Jim	Strege	12/17
Stan	Sroka	12/18
John	Thatcher	12/21
Duane	Joiner	12/22
Bob	Smith	12/24
Jeff	Underwood	12/25
John	Leyden	12/26
Sean	Lee	12/30
Rob	Coughlin	12/31



NEW EMPLOYEES

Welcome to the new kids on the Block team.

Roxana Hernandez	Lucas Simpson	Matt Crutchfield
Dale McClenney Sr.	Mark Beaupre	Ryan Allen
Roberto Morales	Erik Sachs	Thomas George
Michael Situ	Charles Wuchter Jr.	Athanasios Dimopoulos
James Schemmel	Jason Claus	Ronald Salata
Andrew Zastrow		

NEW ARRIVAL



Our very best wishes and congratulations to Brendan and Lorrie Christy on the birth of their son. Eamon Patrick was born on October 23, 2008 and weighed 8 lbs. 14 oz.

CONGRATULATIONS

Kathy from the Niles office was married on November 8, 2008. We send our congratulations and best wishes to David and Kathy Mota.



Happy



Holidays