

Service

Safety

Quality

FEBRUARY, 2009

# the **Block**

C O N N E C T I O N

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***“We will position ourselves to be the premier electrical contractor in this area.”***

## PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

- JACK BLOCK

Have you ever heard the old adage, “hope springs eternal?” This seems to be the tone being set by President Obama. I don’t blame him one bit. He has inherited a mess. He has stated on numerous occasions that things are going to get worse before they get better. I would have to say he is dead on!

The economy is a fragile commodity these days. I absolutely can’t believe the size of the bailout packages that are being kicked around in Congress. They range from \$700 billion to \$1.5 trillion, and all that money goes to whom and for what? It all sounds good, but Americans like to throw money at problems and hope they go away. This one isn’t going to go away any too quickly. This bailout is the tip of the iceberg. We are going to be paying for it for a long time to come. It is going to affect all our lives and our children’s lives. To think that sometime in the future we can over tax the upper income folks is naive. Look at the population. The baby boomers are starting to retire in record numbers. They presently hold the majority of the wealth in this country. Their earning capacity is starting to get behind them. They are going to start drawing on Social Security and Medicare without a large group of earners behind them to contribute to their benefits. With this economic bailout we will put our national debt at approximately 10% of gross domestic product. Then we start to give tax breaks, or eliminate taxes for people who don’t pay a lot in taxes now. Where is this funding going to come from?

The politicians are set. They get elected, work a couple of years, and their pensions and healthcare are set for life. We don’t have that luxury. We have to work for what we get. A classic example is Cook County. In order to pay for government social programs, bureaucrat’s salaries, and Cook County Hospital they raised its sales tax to the highest in the nation. Retailers are leaving the area in droves. Anybody who didn’t do their Christmas shopping online and bought things in this county paid an extra 10% in taxes. There’s no free lunch here.

I think we are in for some rough times ahead. We are going to be facing that together. We can’t really look to government to spend their way out of our mess. They can play a roll but it is up to us to ride this out. Things will get better and we need to survive until they do. That’s what we are going to do. We will position ourselves to be the premier electrical contractor in this area. Never forget who got us here, it was the **“delighted customers.”** They are the ones who will get us through and they will propel us forward as the economy turns. Patience and perseverance are the operative words. That coupled with **“Customer Delight”** is what will make a difference.

# GOING GREEN

- MIKE DEGER

We have been members of the USGBC U. S. Green Building Council for a couple of years. The Chicago Chapter is leading the way to transform the built environment to become ecologically sustainable, profitable, and healthy. Chicago area construction is going green. The USGBC Chicago Chapter offers many programs to educate construction professionals on green technology.

Building owners can apply to have their building LEED certified. LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design.

## **LEED-certified buildings:**

- Lower operating costs and increase asset value.
- Reduce waste sent to landfills.
- Conserve energy and water.
- Healthier and safer for occupants.
- Reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions.
- Qualify for tax rebates, zoning allowances and other incentives in hundreds of cities.
- Demonstrate an owner's commitment to environmental stewardship and social responsibility.

There are four levels of certification a building can strive to achieve:

- LEED Certified
- LEED Silver
- LEED Gold
- LEED Platinum

Mayor Daley has ordered that all new governmental construction in the city will achieve LEED Silver status. The Rush Orthopedics Ambulatory Building we are building on will Be LEED certified. Most of the projects we are bidding these days include LEED certification.

Construction and design professionals can also become LEED certified through the USGBC. Michael Block became a LEED AP at the end of 2008. LEED Professional Accreditation distinguishes building professionals with the knowledge and skills to successfully steward the LEED certification process. LEED Accredited Professionals (LEED APs) have demonstrated a thorough understanding of green building practices and principles and the LEED Rating System.

You may have seen some of the changes on construction sites such as construction waste recycling and erosion controls. Otherwise the electrical items that make a project LEED certifiable are included in the design such as efficient lighting and centralized lighting controls. Also in the material procurement process we have strict requirements to follow.

For more information look to [www.usgbc-chicago.org](http://www.usgbc-chicago.org) and [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org).

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## THIS WEEK'S OURS TO PROTECT ARTICLE

### **"Market Share"**

A strategy to win back market share requires a common method to measure market share. The Construction Labor Research Council (CLRC) released data to measure the electrical construction market. Publications like *Market Share* and *We Built This City* by Electri International use market share data to point to a clear shift from industrial to commercial and residential electrical construction in addition to erosion of overall union market share.

To read this new article and learn about the Ours to Protect campaign visit [www.ourstoprotect.com](http://www.ourstoprotect.com)

# POWER TOOL SAFETY

- DREW BOYCE

Power tools are handy helpers that people use for a variety of purposes in all settings. They come in different styles and sizes from small home-use models to heavier commercial varieties. These tools are useful time savers, but they're also deceptive. They can deliver a paralyzing, or even deadly shock. They can slash, cut and mangle, sometimes easier than larger, stationary machines.

It's easy to forget the potential dangers of power tools because they are usually small, portable and commonly found around the home or shop. Many times they're not treated with enough respect, and they are frequently left lying around in unsafe places.

We should be as careful with power tools and portable electric tools as we are with any other dangerous machinery. Review and remember the following precautions:

- Power tools should never be pointed at anyone, even in fun or when unplugged. There is no excuse for fooling around with potential danger in the workplace.
- Keep fingers well away from switches or buttons when tools are not being used, and unplug or deactivate tools not in use. A power tool can be turned on accidentally, penetrating a hand, arm or leg.
- Don't unplug power cords by pulling on the cord, or raise or lower the equipment by the cord. This can damage the cord and cause the tool to short when reconnected.
- Always check the condition of cords. Don't let them drag on the floor, or fasten them with staples, nails or other means that could damage them.
- Use proper PPE - such as safety glasses when cutting, a dust mask when creating dust and hearing protection when noise levels are high.
- Choose the right tool for the job; inspect it for damage and adjustment and make sure all guards are in place. Remove any damaged equipment from use
- Be sure switches are in the *off* position before you plug tools into an outlet or change parts.
- Make sure the power tool has stopped running before placing it on the ground or a surface that you're working on.
- Only 3-prong grounding extensions are to be used for equipment and plugs must be matched with outlets.
- When working in wet areas or areas that contain flammable liquids use only specified approved tools. Don't unplug or plug equipment with wet hands.
- If you are working at home keep small children away from power tools and the work area. Curious children could hurt themselves or someone else.

Power tools are invaluable, timesaving devices when used properly, but careless or improper use can cause severe injury or death. Always follow safety instructions when operating power tools

**The Power is in Your Hands—Use It Safely!**

Block Electric Company is an  
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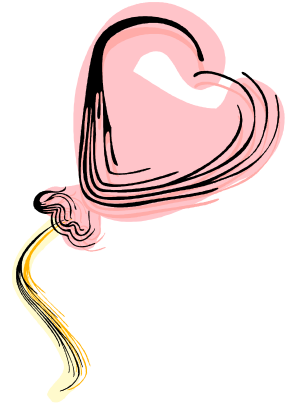
Did you know?

In 1950, Diners Club and American Express launched their charge cards in the USA, the first "plastic money". In 1951, Diners Club issued the first credit card to 200 customers who could use it at 27 restaurants in New York. But it was only until the establishment of standards for the magnetic strip in 1970 that the credit card became part of the information age.

The first use of magnetic stripes on cards was in the early 1960's, when the London Transit Authority installed a magnetic stripe system. San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit installed a paper based ticket the same size as the credit cards in the late 1960's.

## BIRTHDAYS

Tom	Culloton	02/01
Steve	Sansone	02/04
Tom	Zelenika	02/06
Dan	Greene	02/06
Mike	Belke	02/07
Bob	Meyer	02/08
Paul	Durco	02/09
Mark	Beaupre	02/14
Charles	Wuchter Jr.	02/16
Jason	Clauss	02/17
Matt	Monger	02/19
Gene	DePilla	02/21
Steve	VanDyke	02/21
Fred	Biosca	02/22
Dale	Finn	02/26
Mikel	Lentine	02/26
Dawid	Gniecki	02/27



## NEW EMPLOYEES

Welcome to the new kids on the Block team.

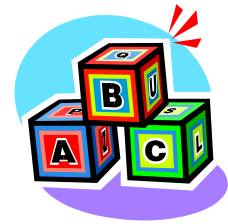
Paul Durco

Ronald Holmes

John Orr

## NEW ARRIVAL

Our very best wishes and congratulations to Betty and Nicholas Prazuch on the birth of their son. Ethan Chase was born on January 10, 2009 and weighed 6 lbs. 6 oz.



## BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

Avoid Colds and Flu: Boost Your Immune System

- Get some shut-eye. Sleep boosts the immune system, A lack of sleep increases the stress hormones that break down the immune system.
- Break out the sweats. Exercise increases hormones that promote immune function, Stress worsens immune function, so any anti-stressing strategies you can do, will help.
- Download some music. A study involving the effects of music therapy on a pregnant woman's immune system was recently conducted, since pregnancy is often a period of immune deficiency.
- Eat more fruits and veggies. You should aim for your ideal body weight and eat a diet full of minerals, vitamins and protein. This includes vegetables and fruit.