

the **Block**
C O N N E C T I O N

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Safety</i>	3
<i>Events</i>	4

“New technology and new classification of workers for our trade will change the way we work and the way we attack projects.”

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

- JACK BLOCK

I'm happy to see the IBEW is recognizing the problems our industry is facing in this economic downturn. By Labor Day all IBEW Locals will have a market recovery plan in place. Local NECA Chapters are working with the Local IBEW Unions to build a market recovery plan together. The way we work is changing fast. New technology and new classification of workers for our trade will change the way we work and the way we attack projects. The following are some excerpts from the article written by Ed Hill and Lindell Lee from the May issue of The Electrical Worker Online. If you would like to read the entire article, go to www.IBEW.org/articles and click on "The Electrical Worker."

Real Recovery Means Growth

With 27 percent of our inside members and 23 percent of our outside trades on the street, there's no way that the 2010 Construction Conference could or should have been any ordinary event.

The worst economy facing the Brotherhood since the Great Depression is showing some signs of picking up. That's why hundreds of delegates came to Washington with the same question tugging at their gut: Will the IBEW take advantage of the recovery when it comes?

You've all heard the stories of how the organized construction industry only wanted the big jobs. And in doing so, we started losing the residential market virtually everywhere, except for a few pockets. Then we lost the smaller commercial projects like gas stations, fast food joints and shopping centers. Now, we are losing some of the big projects too—hospitals, industrial complexes, refineries, large office projects. More and more of them have the signs of nonunion electrical contractors hanging on their job sites.

If we're really concerned about tomorrow—if we really want to emerge from a recovery stronger, not weaker, we need an aggressive new playbook. And we need to start today.

The IBEW can always best our nonunion competitors in skill and training. But if our composite price for journeymen and apprentices leave signatory contractors with uncompetitive bids, our skills and training will be wasting on the bench.

So we established new classifications—construction electrician and construction wireman—not to dilute our skills, but to win projects that were slipping through our fingers.

Continued on Page 2

WEATHERING THE STORM

- MIKE DEGER

The Chicago and Joliet economy is improving slightly from over a year ago. Last year when we bid projects we were the low bidder only to be told the project was cancelled or not funded. Now we are bidding projects and they are going ahead. The difference now is that the market is much more competitive. There are too many contractors all trying to get a piece of the same smaller pie. Everyone is moving into the healthcare niche of the market because their market is nonexistent. Industrial and residential contractors have lost their market to non-union competition. Retail and commercial office work does not exist because they were overbuilt. Until we see the office buildings and empty stores filling up, the construction market in this area will lag behind the rest of the economy. In the past 4 years the number of electrical contractors in the area has declined by over 30%. Luckily we are strong and will be able to weather this storm.

Here is some of the new work that we have landed:

- Chanooka Medical 2nd Floor Pediatrics
- Rush University Medical Center Door Security
- Illinois Valley Hospital Vertical Expansion
- Columbia College Mechanical Renovation
- Evanston Hospital Psych Unit
- O'Hare Airport Restrooms
- Ingalls Family Care Center and ED Exam Room
- Rush University Medical Center OAB 2B Suite
- Maine East High School Auditorium Phase II
- Silver Cross Hospital Communications Systems
- 233 East Walton Elevator Upgrades
- Piser Funeral Home
- Rush University Medical Center JRB Nurse Call Replacement

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Continued from Page 1

Every construction local union will be required to have a full-time organizer. Our International Office will provide support from our Research and Information Technology Departments to help local unions keep track of what nonunion contractors are working in each jurisdiction.

By Labor Day, we expect that every construction local union in the Brotherhood will be signatory to an agreement, subject to review by the International, that addresses our ability to recover the work we are currently not doing.

Local agreements will continue to have distinct features based upon geography and other factors. But every such agreement must include certain features. They include: NEBF pension contributions, health care insurance, construction electrician and construction wireman job classifications, enabling language for the Code of Excellence, safety and health language, more portability for work that the local is not doing and training funds to update skills.

More than a few delegates to the Construction Conference said that one of the most meaningful presentations was the one by Larry Bradley, executive secretary-treasurer of the NEBF. Wise investments have kept our fund relatively stable in tumultuous economic times. But Bradley clearly demonstrated that the only way to maintain current benefit levels and to ensure the NEBF's long-term strength is to grow its number of participants. That, broth-

ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations and thank you to Dale Finn for his years of loyalty, service, and dedication to Block Electric. Dale joined Block Electric on June 4, 1980 and this will be his 30th anniversary.

LASER SAFETY

- DREW BOYCE

"DANGER -Laser in Use" is a common poster in industry today. It has become common because devices that use laser light have so many practical uses. They guide blade alignments on portable cut-off saws, and set-up large rip saws in a timber mill. In construction, they are used in surveying equipment and assist with the layout of ceiling grids or interior walls. Lasers can be used for many operations that require laying a perfectly straight line over a long and/or uneven surface. Higher power devices can cut through steel with precision results. All-in-all, lasers are a valuable tool for improving productivity and accuracy. Yet, because they are so common in industry today, they are sometimes taken for granted. Lasers should always be treated with respect. They represent dangers to those who work with them, and those who work *around* them.

Lasers are generally divided into four basic classifications. These classifications are based upon a system of graded risk. The higher the class the greater potential for personal injury -- particularly to the eyes or skin. Classes of lasers and conditions of risk are as follows:

Class I:	Under normal conditions, will not produce a personal injury hazard.
Class II:	Low powered, visible laser beams normally present no hazard if viewed for short periods. Blinking or turning away is a normal human response.
Class IIIa:	Do not produce a hazard if viewed for only momentary periods without protection.
Class IIIb:	Can produce a hazard if viewed directly.
Class IV:	Hazardous to view with the naked-eye under all conditions. This class also has the potential for starting a fire and inflicting skin damage.

It is important to learn what class of laser you are working *with*, or working *near*, to determine safety precautions you should take. Laser manufacturers are required to record the appropriate classification on the laser. If it is missing, or if the laser has been modified, you should determine its class and safety requirements before activating the system. Some of the basic safety precautions for lasers are:

- Every laser operator must be trained and qualified. Operators must have proof of this qualification and it must stay with them at all times.
- All work areas where lasers are used must be posted with standard laser warning placards.
- A laser must *never* be intentionally directed at another employee.
- The laser must be turned off, capped or its beam shuttered when left unattended for a substantial period of time, such as at meal times, overnight, or during a work shift change.
- Lasers must not be used when it is raining, snowing, foggy, or there is heavy dust in the air. Such conditions may deflect or scatter the radiation. If production cannot be postponed, then employees must be kept well out of range of the source and target of the laser.

The intensity of laser light can be harmful. The next time you find yourself working near a laser or laser-guided equipment, check the classification. What are the precautions? What PPE is required? Do posted signs warn of the lasers use?

Respect the CAUTION or DANGER signs – They are there to keep you out of harm's way.

Block Electric Company is an
Equal Opportunity Employer

Niles:
7107 Milwaukee Avenue
Niles, IL 60714
Phone: 847-647-4030
Fax: 847-647-6980

Shorewood:
203-C Earl Road
Shorewood, IL 60404
Phone: 815-744-2000
Fax: 815-744-6070

We're on the web!
www.blockelectric.com

HELP WANTED, MALE

POSITION: Father (also known as Daddy, Dad, Pop)

JOB DESCRIPTION: Long-term, team players needed, for challenging permanent work in an often chaotic environment. Candidate must possess excellent communication and organizational skills and be willing to work variable hours, which will include evenings and weekends and frequent 24-hour shifts on call. Some overnight travel required.

LENGTH OF JOB: The rest of your life.

POSSIBILITY FOR ADVANCEMENT & PROMOTION: None.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE:

None required (unfortunately). On-the-job training mandatory.

BENEFITS: No health or dental insurance, no pension, no tuition reimbursement, no paid holidays. Available benefits include lifelong opportunities for personal growth, unconditional love, and occasional hugs.

BIRTHDAYS

Jim	Schemmel	06/03
Kathy	Mota	06/06
Brian	Berry	06/06
Joe	Weiszhar	06/08
Bill	Kuta	06/10
Bridgette	Carlyon	06/12
Jeff	Temme	06/14
Tom	Biskie	06/19
George	Brauneis	06/19
Mike	Vanderbilt	06/23
Tim	Boyce	06/24
Jermaine	Batemon	06/24
Joe	Spreitzer	06/25
Jack	Block	06/26



EXERCISE CAUTION IN THE SUMMER HEAT

As the warm days of summer set in, keep these safety tips in mind to avoid stressing your body as you work outdoors:

- 1. Perform your heaviest tasks during the morning.** If you have work that will require you to exert a lot of energy, it's best to do it in the cooler hours of the morning.
- 2. Build your tolerance.** It usually takes a good two weeks for your body to acclimate itself to working in the heat, so give yourself time to adjust to higher temps.
- 3. Use the buddy system.** That way you can keep an eye out and get help if needed.
- 4. Drink water.** Health experts say you should drink a small cup every 15 to 20 minutes when you're working in the heat to stay hydrated and cool.
- 5. Take breaks.** Give your body a chance to cool down by heading off to a cool area for a few minutes.
- 6. Eat lightly.** Avoid heavy or big meals before you have to work in the heat.

T-SHIRT SLOGANS THAT INSPIRE

Clothes can say a lot about you—especially your T-shirts. In a *New York Times* interview, Jana Eggers, CEO of the personalized clothing manufacturer Spreadshirt, reveals her three favorite T-shirt sayings:

- **"I know something you don't know."** Says Eggers, "You can't wear that shirt without starting a conversation."
- **"Be confident, not certain."** A quotation from former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.
- **"Failure is impossible."** You may fail on your way to success, says Eggers. The point is to think differently about failing: Learn from it, and keep moving forward.

Happy Father's Day!