

Service

Safety

Quality

the **Block**

C O N N E C T I O N

MAY, 2009

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“It is no secret that we are a great company and need to continue to be great.”

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

- JACK BLOCK

We have all heard President Obama speak about various companies and bail-outs. He often uses the phrase stakeholders referring to you and me as taxpayers. A stakeholder is a relatively new phrase referring to people who have an interest in something. In this case it is the companies that are accepting Federal funds in order to keep afloat. While it is true, we are all stakeholders in these companies; the reality is that the Federal government is assuming a role in the operations of such companies as AIG, GM, various banks, and other industries. The interesting thing about this is the question, are they really qualified to assume this role?

I got to thinking that really we are all qualified stakeholders in our company. I think we all realize that but sometimes to say it, and acknowledge it, is appropriate. We have always talked about who benefits from our successes. Other than the shareholders, it really is the stakeholders who contribute and reap the benefits of our success. That is all of you. After all, it was Samuel Gompers, founder of the American Federation of Labor, who was quoted as saying “The worst crime against a working person is a company that fails to make a profit.” I think we are all familiar with companies that have succumbed to the woes of the industry over the years. It hasn’t been positive for anyone, certainly not the stakeholders, certainly not the shareholders, and certainly not the industry. These businesses usually go down owing back wages and benefits to their employees. Sometimes they are recoverable and sometimes not.

We are experiencing one of the toughest environments in the industry that I have ever seen in my lifetime. Hopefully we are hitting bottom. How long we are going to stay here is anybody’s guess. There are certainly some unprecedented moves being done in Washington to make sure this isn’t a prolonged environment. I guess all I can say is we will just have to wait and see.

One thing I am here to tell you is that we are going to have to work darn hard to stay profitable and we are going to have to work extremely hard to get new work. Most of all we can’t make any mistakes. The margins in this industry have turned razor thin and there is no margin for error. We are working very hard to identify and introduce new technology to make ourselves more productive and increase our margins. Hopefully, that hard work will pay off in the future. I know that we are all working very hard to promote “**Customer Delight**” on all fronts and for that I want to thank you.

It is no secret we are a great company and need to continue to be great. It takes enormous efforts on everyone’s part to stay profitable with the work we acquire. It takes an equal effort to distinguish us as a premier contractor practicing “**Customer Delight**” from all angles. We have done it before and we will do it again. As long as we have the present teams in place and by keeping a common goal ahead of us we can get through this tough time. We can do it, as we are all stakeholders.

NEW WORK

- MIKE DEGER

Work has been difficult to come by since the economy melted down last fall. Competition is fierce. We recently bid a project that had 13 general contractors and 47 electrical contractors bidding. We bid the Hoffman Estates police station last week. That project had 9 electrical bidders including many we had never heard of before. Contractors are doing some risky things to get work. They are taking jobs for prices well below what it will cost them to do the work. There are over 100 less electrical contractors in Cook County than there were a year ago. Another year will likely see a lot more throwing in the towel.

But we aren't giving up. We are still pursuing and bidding many different projects. We have been through these slow downs before and will come through this one just fine. It seems to me that the economy is starting to recover. There are more projects out to bid. The many engineers and architects we interface with tell me they are busy. That is a good sign for the near future.

Here are a few of the newest projects we have been awarded:

- 1 Water Tower Place Condominiums Fire Alarm Replacement
- 2 Park Tower Plumbing Repairs
- 3 Morris Hospital Data Center
- 4 Lafayette Plaza Service Replacement
- 5 Batavia Post Office
- 6 Chanooka Medical Center
- 7 H&M Warehouse
- 8 Near North Montessori School
- 9 Shedd Aquarium Miscellaneous Projects
- 10 One Superior Place Lighting
- 11 Rush University Medical Center Various Projects
- 12 LaRabida Hospital Second Floor
- 13 Northwestern Hospital Volunteers and Dietary Offices

We also have several projects that will go ahead when funded. Please work safely out there.

THIS WEEK'S OURS TO PROTECT ARTICLE

"Florida Initiative"

IBEWHourPower released the video, Florida Initiative, to explain how a decline in market share inspired and motivated the adoption of the Construction Wiremen/Construction Electrician classification in the "Florida Small Works Addendum to the Inside Agreement." Several IBEW and NECA members in the Florida area revealed their thoughts on the results of the CW/CE program and its affect on union market share.

To read this new article and learn about the Ours to Protect campaign visit www.ourstoprotect.com

ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations and thank you to Tom Culloton for his 25 years of loyalty, service, and dedication to Block Electric.

PICKING THE PROPER GLOVE

- DREW BOYCE

Your hands are one of your most valuable assets. Without them, you wouldn't be able to touch, hold, feel, write or gesture. In fact, you couldn't do much of anything. Too often, however, we take them for granted. We don't pay attention to how we treat or mistreat them! Just a few examples of when your hands should be protected is whenever you are cutting, painting, welding, or handling sharp metal, chemicals, needles, or blood samples. And it is very important to wear the right glove for each specific task, since no one glove protects against all hazards.

You now have even more reason to wear your protective equipment since OSHA has added hand safety to its standard on personal protective equipment. The standard requires workers to wear appropriate protection whenever their hands are exposed to hazards, and lists guidelines for employees to follow when selecting and purchasing the proper gloves. The following list points out the advantages and disadvantages of certain gloves.

The most widely used and "abused" glove material is cotton.

- Advantages: low cost; perspiration absorption; versatility in application; more cut resistance than leather; moderate abrasion and heat protection.
- Disadvantages: cut protection is limited; short lifetime; thermal application range limited to about 400 F.

The next most widely used form of hand protection is leather.

- Advantages: good puncture resistance and abrasion resistance; absorbs impact and helps cushion blows to the hand; shields against sparks; greater thermal protection than cotton.
- Disadvantages: limited cut resistance; limited dexterity, depending on thickness of leather.

Natural rubber, neoprene, nitrile, PVC are among many elastomers used for gloves.

- Advantages: liquid-proof for resistance against caustics, acids and other chemicals.
- Disadvantages: offer limited cut resistance.

Metal mesh and other new fibers known as Kevlar, Spectra, and Vectran

- Advantages: flexible, cut resistant, lightweight, and resist thermal transfer.
- Disadvantages: may be costly

Washes and creams: Wearing gloves is important, but it is also important to maintain personal hygiene and keep your hands clean to prevent infection. If you use barrier creams, always be sure to wash your hands before putting on the cream, and at the end of the day, when you are ready to go home. Barrier creams provided limited protection against alkali's and acids, but are sometimes used in conjunction with gloves.

Another great hand protection tool is the pre-moistened heavy-duty hand towel. Employees can use these towels to remove heavy grease and grime at their workstations or remote job sites.

MARATHON MAN

Congratulation to Leo Keigher who ran in the Boston Marathon on April 20, 2009. Leo finished the 40k run in 4 hours 39 minutes 08 seconds.



Block Electric Company is an
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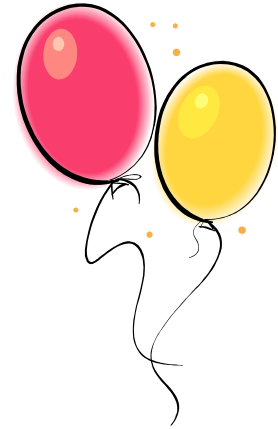
We're on the web!
www.blockelectric.com

Did you know?

- The average person laughs 13 times a day.
- Women blink nearly twice as much as men.
- The human heart creates enough pressure while pumping to squirt blood 30 feet!!
- If you are right handed, you will tend to chew your food on your right side. If you are left handed, you will tend to chew your food on your left side.
- The attachment of the human skin to muscles is what causes dimples.
- Chewing gum while peeling onions will keep you from crying.
- Laughing lowers levels of stress hormones and strengthens the immune system. Six-year-olds laugh an average of 300 times a day. Adults only laugh 15 to 100 times a day.
- Every time you sneeze some of your brain cells die.
- When you blush, the lining of your stomach also turns red.

BIRTHDAYS

Greg	Gorski	05/04
Bryan	Poetzingler	05/04
Chad	Fowler	05/04
Ron	Salata	05/08
Steve	Slager	05/08
Joe	Sambucaro	05/13
Eric	Aponte	05/18
Miguel	Chagoya	05/20
Mike	Haines	05/21
Todd	Giusto	05/21
Sergio	Portugal	05/22
Brian	Stevens	05/27
Elizabeth	Prazuch	05/27
Jeff	Condon	05/30



NEW EMPLOYEES

Welcome to the new kids on the Block team.

Johnathan Gardner

Allen Siefert

Chad Fowler

NEW ARRIVAL

Congratulations to Brian and Jill Cerny on the birth of their daughter. Hanley Danielle was born on March 13, 2009 and she weighed 8 lbs. 10 ozs.



What will you sacrifice during these dark days?

Even during tough economic times, some things are too important to give up. For American consumers, according to a survey conducted by BIGresearch for STORES magazine, those things include the Internet, which 80.9 percent of survey participants aren't willing to sacrifice, and cell phones (64.1 percent). Among other necessities: cable TV (60.5 percent), discount clothes shopping (43 percent), and haircuts and coloring (40 percent). Shoppers are willing to scale back on such items as luxury handbags (92.2 percent), satellite radio (90.9 percent), and maid service (90 percent).

Our condolences to Dan Stieber and his family on the death of his father.

ACCIDENT UPDATE

Ron Stefaniak was injured on the Provena St. Joseph Medical Center job.
Miquel Chagoya was injured on the Will County Adult Detention Facility job.