

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

- JACK BLOCK

Safety 3
 Events 4

*“To
 all
 our
 families
 “Happy
 Thanksgiving.”*

There is much concern over the economy and the state of business right now. Everyone wants to know which businesses will survive and who will not. I believe the concerns are justified, but I want to address all of you who may have concerns about Block Electric. We have a very strong base and we are positioned to be able to weather any further economic downturns that may come our country's way.

Block Electric was established in 1920 and has certainly had its ups and downs since that time. The late 1920's and early 1930's were tough for everyone, but that was before my time. The toughest times that I have personally seen were in the early 1970's. Our customer base had contracted and we had several bad jobs. There are not many of us left to remember those times, but they were a struggle. Since that time we started slowly to shift our outlook on business. We recognized that waiting for the phone to ring was not the best marketing philosophy. We struggled and I think with a shift in attitudes and personnel that evolved over the years we have built a foundation that has brought us our recent successes.

Those tough times taught us valuable lessons. We learned to be conservative in the work we take, be conservative in how money is allocated and respect our people. In addition to operating the business with financial conservatism, I realized that it is our people that make us different from our competition. This is why I have preached **“Customer Delight”** over the years. I realize that not every person who walked through our doors could accept this philosophy and carry it out. As a company, we set our sights on only associating ourselves with people who were capable of sharing this mantra. It came slowly at first, but it has become our lifeblood.

These are certainly tough times. I really thought the worst was behind us. However, it is possible that we may bump along with this economy before it gets back to running smoothly. But for now, I am here to tell you that we have positioned ourselves in a manner that will enable us to ride out the storm. We are in the best shape possible. Everyone should be aware of the national economy.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

- JACK BLOCK

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Everyone should be aware that financially, I can control our destiny and that Block Electric's future is rock solid. As far as customers go, you all control our future. There will always be work. Even in 1929 there was work, but the work goes to the people who impress their customers the most. We have been doing that! I believe you all have been doing your part, and I want you all to know that I am doing my part. We will survive and we will prosper as long as we continue to work together.

Be sure and vote for the candidates of your choice. Vote with your head and not with your heart. There are two very different choices out there. There are two people and two philosophies that are very different from each other. It's up to us to pick which direction we want this country to go in. It's a big assignment.

OURS TO PROTECT

- MIKE DEGER

Last month we looked at the loss in market share of the surrounding counties. The trend is definitely negative. Local 117 is the worst with only a 39% market share trending down 13%. Locals 150 and 461 are over 50% market shares but trending down at a rate of 16% each. These numbers are for the 2004 to 2006 period. If the trends remained in place then the 2007 and 2008 numbers will show an even lower market share. Cook and Will counties appear to be in better shape but the wolves are at the doorstep. If a large non-union contractor gets established in the suburbs, how long do you think it will be before they decide to move into Cook and Will Counties?

A group of concerned contractors from Cook County have established a WEB site to address this issue. The site is Ours to Protect. It is an informational site. The site is new and still in development. The hope is for a dynamic site where information and ideas can be shared from around the country.

If you would like some information on how we as an industry can protect the market share of union construction visit www.ourstoprotect.com.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving.

MARATHON MAN



Congratulations to Dave Boonstra who ran in the Chicago Marathon on Sunday, October 12, 2008. He finished in 4 Hours, 1 minute, and 34 seconds.

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:

- Never use a "fueled" heater within 10' of any debris piles, temporary enclosures, tarps, combustible materials, or flammable materials.
- Maintain a good fresh air supply, to avoid oxygen deficient atmospheres; flame uses oxygen.
- Every heating unit must have a fire extinguisher immediately available.
- Never leave an operating heater unattended during non-working hours. The use of temporary heaters in confined spaces is never recommended; when they are used, sufficient ventilation and temperature control must be provided.
- Allow the heater to cool down before it is re-fueled.
- When the heater is not in use, always turn off the gas supply.
- Never store used or extra LPG containers inside. Only those in use should be present.
- 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.
- 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!

Block Electric Company is an
Equal Opportunity Employer

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We're on the web!
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Did you know.....

- The length from your wrist to your elbow is the same as the length of your foot.
- Your heart beats 101,000 times a day. During your lifetime it will beat about 3 billion times and pump about 400 million litres (800 million pints) of blood.
- On average, you breathe 23,000 times a day.
- On average, you speak almost 5,000 words a day - although almost 80% of speaking is self-talk (talking to yourself).
- We actually do not see with our eyes - we see with our brains. The eyes basically are the cameras of the brain. One-quarter of the brain is used to control the eyes.
- Not all our taste buds are on our tongue; about 10% are on the palette and the cheeks.
- If the amount of water in your body is reduced by just 1%, you'll feel thirsty.
- The human head contains 22 bones.
- You'll drink about 75,000 litres (20,000 gallons) of water in your lifetime.

BIRTHDAYS

Gary	Jones	11/01
Niko	Varvoulentos	11/01
Matt	Hamilton	11/04
Dan	Crane	11/05
Steven	Pietras	11/11
Demetri	Konstantelos	11/11
Manuel	Diaz	11/12
Tom	Kale	11/14
Leo	Keigher	11/15
Gene	Giunti	11/18
Ed	Roy	11/18
Felix	Dacpano	11/20
Rich	Wydra	11/21
Pat	Deliberto	11/21
Adam	Mellen	11/26
John	Knox	11/29



NEW EMPLOYEES

Welcome to the new kids on the Block team.

Thomas	Zelenika	Alan	Patel
Jeffrey	Condon	Sergio	Portugal
Matthew	Hamilton	Edward	Little
Luis	Guerrero	Steven	Graf
Eric	Wieczorek	Steven	Pietras
Robert	Koehler	Michael	Asquini
Thomas	Donovan	Demetri	Konstantelos

PRESIDENTS AND ELECTIONS

1. How many presidential candidates have won the popular vote but lost the election?
2. Which president received the most popular votes in history?
a. Dwight D. Eisenhower, b. John F. Kennedy, c. Richard M. Nixon, d. Franklin D. Roosevelt
3. How many presidents have remained bachelors throughout their presidencies?
4. Who gave the longest inaugural address speech but remained in office the shortest length of time?

See the answers below.

The answers are:

1. Four: Andrew Jackson lost to John Quincy Adams (1824); Samuel J. Tilden lost to Rutherford B. Hayes (1876); Grover Cleveland lost to Benjamin Harrison (1888); Al Gore lost to George W. Bush (2000).
2. C: Richard Nixon with 112.6 million votes.
3. One: James Buchanan.
4. William Henry Harrison, who spoke for an hour and 45 minutes during a snowstorm and died about one month later.