

## FEATURED PROJECT

# NSUHS Medical Office Building



*Block Electric recently worked with North Shore University Health Systems to transform the landmark Lovells of Lake Forest restaurant along Waukegan Road into a state-of-the-art Medical Office Building.*  
(See story on page 4)

## President's Message



The fall season is now behind us and we are in the home stretch to complete the year with the anticipation of a strong start in 2017.

While 2016 got off to a slower start than usual and our volume of work never reached the levels of previous years, we are looking forward to some new and exciting jobs that will challenge us and pave the way for a variety of potential accounts in the future.

We are expanding our reach beyond the usual hospital, commercial and industrial work we are accustomed to.

We are looking forward to a new year that has us building a theatre on Navy Pier in Chicago, constructing a high-tech lab building on Northwestern University's campus in Evanston, and working with Costco on a new hamburger and hot dog processing plant in Morris.

Moving forward we will continue to provide our customers with service, safety, and quality, and ensure that they receive the best "*Customer Delight*" experience in the industry in 2017 and beyond.

During this holiday season we would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone at Block Electric who has worked so hard to make our success and progress possible. We would like to wish our Block Electric families a beautiful holiday season and a very Happy New Year!

— JACK BLOCK



# Jeff Underwood Retires



*“Thank you, Jeff, for being an innovator and most of all for being my friend!”*

—JACK BLOCK

*by Jack Block*

I have worked with Jeff Underwood way before he started here as our Chief Financial officer. When Jeff and I first met in 1978, he was a young accountant with the accounting firm of Fox & Co. and was assigned to the team responsible for completing our financial audits.

Over the years I saw what I knew was a superstar. I went out of my way to become Jeff's friend and he became mine, as well as my confidant. Jeff never put himself above anything I asked of him and his advice was always straight from his heart. Simply stated, I would present a problem, and he would think about it and come up with a solution. It wasn't always necessarily what I wanted to hear, but it was always a solution that was the best for Block Electric.

In 1980 when my dad got sick, I really relied upon Jeff's counsel and advice, both financially and personally. It took a long time of working together to convince him that there was a home for him at Block Electric.

Finally, in July of 1997, Jeff decided to leave his prior life in public accounting and join us in our quest to transform our company from a small shop with short term financial goals into a major contractor in the electrical industry. That was a substantial undertaking for a man who had spent his entire life working with two individuals who started their careers in public accounting and went on to form their own firm, Borhart Spellmeyer & Company, which bears their name. Making the transformation was not an easy decision for Jeff since he was our independent auditor and knew our company strictly from a financial background.

However, Jeff, Christie, and his family loved challenges and knew the move would be one of the biggest of his life. Fortunately, Jeff never looked back. From the time he decided to take the position as our Chief Financial Officer until now, Jeff shepherded Block Electric through some of the biggest and most challenging projects we have undertaken.

Block Electric has never had to borrow from any bank or outside source, and we have always paid our bills on time. We have an outstanding credit rating, have never missed a payroll, have never been late with our submission of union benefits, and have an outstanding reputation of fairness with our suppliers, workers and customers that far

exceeds most other contractors in our industry.

Furthermore, Block Electric possesses the biggest bond line of credit our company has ever seen and we have enjoyed the ability to tackle massive projects, which something that many of our competitors cannot say. Obviously it takes the whole team working together in order to bid and secure projects that otherwise would be **outside of our realm**, but having a rock solid financial statement is much more than just an underpinning to what we do.

Jeff has decided to retire this December and I can't even begin to tell you what that will mean to us as individuals and as a company. Most of us have never fully realized the hard work and dedication that Jeff has put into his career with us, but I sure do. I can never thank Jeff enough for taking that leap of faith and coming on board with us. I know he has enjoyed his time at Block Electric because Jeff is someone who likes a challenge. Jeff has told me that he never missed leaving public accounting because every day has brought new and unusual challenges.

I have never had to say to Jeff “maybe it would be nice if...”, since he seems to always be one step ahead. The most important aspects of our business are to bid, secure and manage our projects, all of which require the speedy and efficient flow of information. Jeff innovated and installed most of the practices and systems we use to accomplish our objectives by working together with everyone in the office and in the field.

In closing, I would like to say thank you, Jeff, for being an innovator and most of all for being my friend! We could never have accomplished what we have accomplished without you; that I know. I also feel blessed that Jeff's son Ryan has been working with us and is ready to take over as Chief Financial Officer effective January 1. Ryan's background is similar to his father's in many ways, most notably that he came to us as a CPA from a major public accounting firm. Most of all, Ryan is Jeff and Christie's son, and they are two of the finest people I know.

I know we all will miss Jeff, but we also look forward to the guidance Ryan can bring to us in our future endeavors. Please join me in wishing Jeff and Christie an abundance of success and good health as they start the next chapter in their new lives together.



## A NEW LOOK: Shorewood Renovation

Block Electric's Shorewood office has taken on a new look. It features beautiful hardwood floors, marble reception area, updated offices and modern conference room.



## FEATURED PROJECT

# NSUHS Medical Office Bu

Block Electric recently completed the construction of North Shore University Health Systems new Medical Office Building, which is located on the site of the former Lovells Restaurant in Lake Forest.

Lovells was originally owned by Captain James Lovell, who was one of the original Apollo 13 astronauts. Memorabilia from that flight, as well as other flights he took, was featured at the popular landmark restaurant which opened on April 23, 1999. Two years ago Captain Lovell sold the business to his

son Jay and Jay's wife Darcie. The restaurant closed in April of 2015 and was sold to North Shore University Health Systems.

Construction of the new Medical Office Building, located at 915 S. Waukegan Road, began on January 7, 2016. The Medical Office was completed and open for business on September 1, 2016.

The existing three-story stone and brick structure was converted into a state-of-the-art Medical Office Building which will serve many residents along the North Shore.



"The crew was an excellent example of customer delight solving all the customer situations w



# Building

Greg Van Dreese was the foreman on the job and worked with Jim Schemmel, Keven Neumann and Joe Roppolo.

"Greg Van Dreese should be commended for his countless and continued efforts to provide Customer Delight on all the projects he participates in," said Jeff Keltz. "His ability to be a welcoming figure to the general contractors, owners and company representatives is one of his greatest qualities and Block Electric is very fortunate to have such a talented electrician."



with great cost effective solutions making for a very happy customer. Well done guys!" —Jeff Keltz

## 12 steps of Christmas electrical safety

The holiday season is in full swing and Christmas is right around the corner! It's a wonderful time of year and staying safe around electricity will keep the holidays bright for you, your family and friends. As you "deck the halls" and make other preparations, please review these electrical safety tips and take care to avoid potential hazards.

■ 1: Inspect all electrical decorations for damage before use. Cracked or damaged sockets, loose or bare wires and loose connections may cause a serious shock or can start a fire.

■ 2: Do not overload electrical outlets.

■ 3: Never connect more than three strings of incandescent lights. More than three strands may not only trip a circuit breaker, but also can cause a fire.

■ 4: Check decorations for certification label.

■ 5: Make sure all extension cords and electrical decorations used for outdoor decorating are marked for outdoor use.

■ 6: If using a live tree, keep it fresh by watering daily. Dry trees are a serious fire hazard. When trimming the tree, only use non-combustible or flame-resistant materials and lights approved by a nationally recognized testing laboratory.

■ 7: Use battery-operated candles in place of traditional candles whenever possible. Almost half of home decoration fires are caused by traditional candles, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

■ 8: Keep combustibles, including Christmas trees, at least three feet from heat sources.

■ 9: Protect electrical cords from damage. To avoid shock or fire hazards, cords should never be pinched by furniture, forced into small spaces such as doors or windows, placed under rugs, located near heat sources or attached by nails or staples.

■ 10: Stay in the kitchen when something is cooking. Unattended cooking equipment is the leading cause of home cooking fires according to the National Fire Protection Association.

■ 11: Turn off, unplug and extinguish all decorations when going to sleep or leaving.

■ 12: When contemplating electronic toys for children, be sure to read the manufacturer's instructions and warning labels.

## FOCUS ON SAFETY: Safety is a never-ending job

*by SeaBright Insurance Loss Control*

When things on the job are going along smoothly and mishaps/accidents are not occurring, we can become too relaxed about safety. The job of safety is a never-ending one and must be emphasized by everyone at all times.

Safety is similar to quality—it must be constantly pursued. Supervisors, foreman and employees in general should be constantly alert for unsafe acts by coworkers. Activities such as running, horseplay, jumping off of docks, piers, equipment or any elevation can and do result in serious injuries.

Shortcuts in acceptable work procedures cause injuries and damage to equipment. This includes inappropriate use of tools, such as using a screwdriver for a prying tool, failure to wear personal protective equipment for a short job, and removing an equipment guard "for just a moment". If we forget to reemphasize these fundamental safety precautions, there will be accidents.

We can learn valuable safety lessons and prevent recurring accidents by discussing past accidents. We cannot sit around and wait for every type of accident to occur before we take steps to stop them. Be proactive—take action before the accident by correcting unsafe acts and conditions.

**Reactively is to play catch up...proactively is to be ahead.** A good safety program is based on preventing future accidents, not reactively discussing them. To be ahead and stay ahead, safety must be addressed every day. Training of employees, inspection of equipment, job pre-planning and discussions of new hazards is an ongoing task, just as the emphasis on quality is ongoing.

If you relax the emphasis on safety, you will be reactively discussing what COULD have been done to prevent the incident. Be proactive in your daily safety efforts and you will be discussing how you prevent accidents and have a great safety record. That is a lot better than discussing what went wrong!

### Block Electric's Safety Policy

It is our policy to provide all employees with a safe, healthful, and hazard-free work place. The intent at all times is to comply with the provisions of the Williams-Steiger Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSHA).

Block Electric recognizes that accident prevention and efficient production are interrelated. We further recognize our responsibility to provide adequate training, safeguards and safety equipment for each employee. In turn each employee bears the responsibility to comply with all safety regulations and the use of required safety equipment. The safety and well being of our employees has been and will continue to be of primary importance.

Our EMR is .70 and our Contractor Score is 2390. Drew Boyce is our safety director.



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Marriage

Congratulations to Dustin Ritter on his recent marriage to Liz on September 9, 2016.

## New Baby

Congratulations to Michael and Erika Block on their new addition. Baby Olivia Louise Block was born on September 28 at 5:20am 7lbs 4oz 20 inches long.



## NEW JOURNEYMAN

## Scott Block

Congratulations to Scott Block who became a new Journeyman on December 13, 2016.



## Customer Delight

Dear Mike Block,

I wanted to share with you, and your contractors a sincere thank you for your help and expertise in repairing the ground trouble issue at Marley Creek.

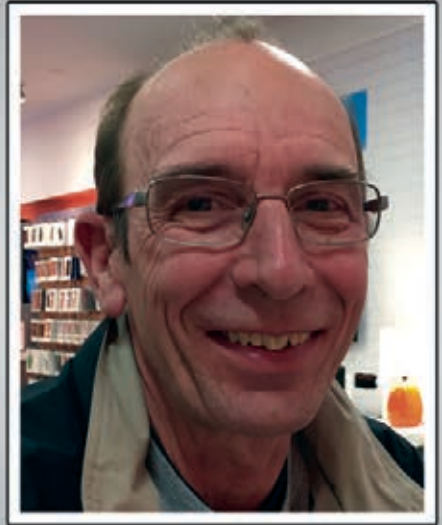
The crew was very informative to me in explaining the issues they found while they were working on the project.

Keep up the great work. Your help is greatly appreciated by me.

Sincerely,

Phil Palmisano

Avalon Realty Associates, L.L.C.  
Rolling Meadows, Illinois



## Joe Parthun retires

We would like to extend our congratulations to Joe Parthun on his recent retirement. Joe has been employed with Block Electric since May of 1996.

Over the past 20 years Joe has been a valued member of the Block Electric team. Though he has worked at many locations over the years, Joe has been the go to guy at Toyal America for many years and Harrah's Casino since 2001. Joe will be missed by everyone.

Congratulations to Joe and his wife Peggy as they enter this new phase in their lives. We all wish you the best of everything as you move forward.

## Also retiring...

The following employees will be retiring in early 2017: Tom Flynn, Gary Crutchfield and Joe Vignocchi.

We wish them and their families happiness and health as they embark on their new journey in life.

Congratulations and thank you for all of your hard work and dedication.



**Block Electric Company**  
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Block Electric Company is an Equal Opportunity Employer

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to see our new updated website!



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