Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Those of us in the construction industry understand that it takes a special kind of toughness to succeed in our chosen careers. As members of the IBEW we also understand how important it is to stand together, with one voice, in order to negotiate a fair wage and benefit package with our contractors. We believe in shared prosperity when work is good and shared sacrifice when it’s not. That being said, nothing could have prepared us for the extreme hardships we’ve experienced since the start of the great recession.

The reckless corporate greed that nearly collapsed the greatest economy the world has ever known has not ended. These same corporate gamblers are currently attempting to shift the blame to unions simply because we have negotiated health care and pension benefits for our members. These corporate gangsters hate unions because unions shift the balance of power towards workers and that might cut into their bottom line. Their business plan is to silence our voice in the workplace by eliminating our ability to participate in the political process with a corporate power grab in the form of a deceptive ballot initiative. Our voice will be heard as we fight the corporate deception campaign and defeat their anti-union agenda.

The real strength of our economy is the purchasing power of working men and women in the middle class and its unions just like ours that give all working families a leg up to achieve the American dream. In good times or bad, organized labor will always be the right choice to defend and improve a worker’s quality of life. Please take a moment to read the corporate power grab article on the back page of this newsletter and prepare to work with me to defend working families by defeating the big business interests here in our great state.

Last year was without question the most difficult period of unemployment and heartbreak our Local Union has ever endured. The tragic loss of our President Jim McQuaid will forever mark the depth and breadth of the pain and despair of 2011. Add in the extended periods of unemployment or under employment that many of our members have experienced and it’s enough to shake the very foundation of even the toughest construction worker.

This great recession has forced many to make very difficult budgetary decisions about the household bills we pay to reflect the reality of a lower income.

Expenses also had to be reduced at the Local. After two years of living off our reserves, waiting for the economy to recover, I had to let go two full time business agents and a part time clerical to stem the tide of red ink. Prior to this decision and during this time period I asked my staff if they would be willing to take one Friday off a month without pay to keep everyone working. I made it clear at the time that the Bylaws did not allow for furlough time but everyone felt it was the right thing to do. Let me stress that all the business agents agreed to the furlough time off and in fact they looked forward to their three-day weekend.

In a last chance effort to avoid layoffs, the staff once again agreed to increase furloughs to one day a week for several months last summer. I bring this to your attention in the spirit of full disclosure concerning the operation of your union office because immediately after I informed the staff of the unavoidable layoffs John Lloyd contacted the International Office demanding that he be paid for all the furlough time that he took off. This cost the Local thousands of dollars at a time when we could least afford it. Despite this setback, the reduced expenses allowed the Local to experience a positive cash flow trend over the last 6 months of 2011.

This year has started off much better with many signs that a recovery is underway. For the first time in several years we have placed nearly all our apprentices with employers. A handful of our apprentices and several journeymen are working in Locals 6 and 595 as these areas have full employment at this time. For those willing to travel it looks like jobs can once again be found in our sister locals.

Here at home I believe we will start clearing our available for work lists this summer. The first major project that I expect to start this year is the Calpine Wild Horse 49 Megawatt geothermal power plant at the Geysers. The general contractor is currently taking bids from subcontractors. Calpine has signed a Project Labor Agreement, which includes a $55 per day subsistence (Continued on page 2)
all construction workers on the project.

The other project that we’re counting on is the Sonoma Resort and Casino in Rohnert Park. The owner is currently selecting the construction manager. Once selected the construction manager will be signing a PLA. We hope to break ground late this summer.

There are several other projects that we are working on that should offer employment opportunities this year. They include the Museum on the Square at the old AT&T building at Courthouse Square in Santa Rosa and a SMART maintenance facility in a yet to be determined site in Sonoma County.

The reality of purchasing and then developing our very own state of the art apprenticeship training center is at hand. The JATC recently put an offer in on the buildings located just south of the current training center on Corby Avenue and it was accepted. If all goes well during the due diligence period we should close escrow in May. We all realize the high value that the IBEW and our NECA partners place on safety and training. It takes more than just talk to train a highly productive electrical worker…it takes a commitment to quality and pride in a job well done. It’s our skill, knowledge and the resulting productivity that sets us apart from the low road business model that defines the unorganized sector of the electrical industry.

Our new training center will give us the perfect opportunity to show our customers, the local businesses and awarding agencies that purchase electrical services, the difference between our high road business model and the low road non union model.

Work smart, work safe and may God bless you all.

MEMBER APPRECIATION DINNER

MARK YOU CALENDAR

Member Appreciation Dinner - Old Timers Night will be held on Friday, October 5, 2012 at the Sheraton Hotel in Petaluma. We will be mailing out reservations closer to the date.

DENISE SOZA—BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE

Work has slowly been trickling in. From December to the posting of this newsletter we have placed 40 apprentices on jobs, and dispatched 22 JW’s and 15 S&C Installers. With big projects on the horizon this year we are optimistic and hope these upcoming jobs will put the rest of our brothers and sisters to work. For our members who can and are willing to travel, go sign Local 6 in the city, also 595 Oakland are close and hiring. There is also Local 48 Portland, where calls are going unfilled. You do need a license in Oregon; you can call the Building Codes Division at 503-373-1268 for more info, or go to the website bcd.oregon.gov to get an application online.

California State Certification things you should know: If you missed the 32 upgrade hours you can still fill out the renewal form, just fill out the bottom box as well and send an additional $100. This will require you to take the test again but keep your same certification number. You would also do the same above scenario if you don’t have the 2000 hours required for the 3 year period. Remember you are signing the renewal form under penalty and perjury. If you have never taken the test before you are now required to verify employment with an employment history report from the social security office. Our website www.ibewlocal551.org also has a link with information on State Certification. There is also a link for (members only) offering online training so you can earn your Certification hours. Check those expiration dates on your cards so you can stay current.

With 551 working a short staff it is a great benefit when members call the hall with information about contractors working job sites you’re not familiar with. We may be able to fill you in with details or it may be something missed that we need to take a look at. Keep your eyes and ears open brothers and sisters this is our work! We have 2 new contractors on board, Fowler Electric doing inside construction and PCD doing Sound and Communications. We are working to add more to the list. Your help is truly appreciated, thank you!

This is also an election year, Presidential, Congress, Supervisors, and other local races. It is important to get the right people elected into office. We want to elect candidates that take interest in labor and working families. We need these elected to stand up and fight for us, not just take office and forget who got them there. And when they are elected it is important that they here from us to know our concerns. Right now it’s JOBS! There are many other issues out there, lobby your hobby, but vote your paycheck! You may grumble but that’s ok, just say yes when I call you when this hall needs a hand.

Habitat for Humanity is in desperate need for volunteers. Please call me at the hall for more information. See you at the next Union Meeting Brothers and Sisters and please work safe!
MEMBER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MAP)

MAP provides all eligible members (excluding retirees) of the Redwood Empire Electrical Workers Health & Welfare Plan member assistance care. You, your eligible dependents and all household members are eligible for 3 free counseling sessions for each “incident” or problem that you may need help with.

The following are some examples of MAP services: divorce, job stress/lack of job stress, anxiety/depression, family issues, grief & loss, parenting skills, chemical abuse, landlord/tenants, wills, domestic violence, etc.

Just call PBH (Pacificare Behavioral Health) for preauthorization prior to receiving any services. The PBH toll-free number is 877-225-2267. When calling please mention you are a participant of the Redwood Empire Electrical Workers Health & Welfare Plan.

UNION PLUS MORTGAGE PROGRAM

Union Plus Mortgage Program offers people protection for their most important asset.

If you’re like many union workers, your house is the most valuable asset you have. But it’s more than an asset: it’s your home. You need to do everything you can to protect it. One of the best things you can do is to get a Union Plus Mortgage.

★How will getting a Union Plus Mortgage loan protect my home?

This product, made available to union members by Union Privilege, was created to help members in time of hardship. In the event of layoff, disability, or a union-sanctioned strike, Union Privilege makes your mortgage payment directly to the mortgage provider with an interest-free loan for up to six months. The intent of the program is to give you a way to stay current on your mortgage while seeking new employment or waiting for the disability checks to arrive. By keeping your mortgage current, creditors are not calling, your credit rating stays intact, and the peace of mind for you and your family is invaluable. (Please note that the benefit kicks in after the borrower has made 12 payments on his loan.)

★How much does having this mortgage assistance clause cost me?

Nothing. It is free to members of qualifying unions, just for being a union member. And not only is there no charge for the protection, your closing costs are discounted $495!!

★I’m interested in learning more about the program, and about current rates, down payment requirements, etc. What do I do next?

The Union Plus Mortgage is available exclusively through Chase, who Union Privilege selected to be the provider of this product. You can learn more talking to a loan officer at your local Chase branch, or calling our Union Plus Mortgage coordinator, Mary Niederhaus (916-567-5309), and she will assist you.

CONDOLENCES

Our sympathies to the families and friends of:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEMBERS NAME</th>
<th>BORN</th>
<th>DECEASED</th>
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<tr>
<td>Charles Alexander</td>
<td>06/26/29</td>
<td>01/03/11</td>
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<td>Steven Rahmn</td>
<td>03/08/42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stanley Stammer</td>
<td>07/09/16</td>
<td>10/15/11</td>
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Stanley was the oldest retiree in Local 551 & a member for 74 years!

STEVE STOBEL—JATC DIRECTOR

There are a number of our members that have an expiration date for their State Certification in 2012. We are required to complete 32 hours of continuing education within the three year span of the license. As your expiration date approaches you will need to submit the “Renewal Certification” form (available on the DAS web site), copies of your proof of the 32 hours of continuing education, and a $100 renewal fee to the State of California. For the quickest turn around on your renewal application, send it in no sooner than 60 days, but no later than 30 days before your expiration date.

We are planning to schedule continuing education classes here at the Training Center. Some of the recent classes were CPR/First Aid, OSHA 10 (we are qualified to teach OSHA 30), and Advanced Lighting Control. If there are any classes or subjects that you would like to see given, or would like to teach, contact us and we’ll see if we can set up the class.

The Statewide Electrical JATC has partnered with 360Training to bring you affordable electrical continuing education available at your convenience. Earn CEU’s for State certification and recertification, over 50 courses available on a wide range of topics including OSHA 10 hour and OSHA 30 hour training and 24/7 Support. Their information is available on the Locals website under “New Online Training”
Big Corporations want to Silence Our Voice

Background

A DECEPTIVE BALLOT INITIATIVE to trick voters into giving corporations more power will appear in November. Millionaires and wealthy corporate interests say the measure is balanced reform that gets special interests out of politics.

- What they don’t tell you is that this DECEPTIVE ACT WOULD SILENCE WORKING FAMILIES and their unions while doing virtually nothing to rein in corporate spending—and that hurts all of us.

The Facts

- The measure creates a huge loophole for corporations allowing UNLIMITED SPENDING on politics—while silencing working families and their unions.

- The measure prohibits unions from using dues through payroll deduction on ballot measures or candidates but does NOTHING TO STOP CORPORATIONS from spending billions in profits to influence elections.

- The measure LIMITS FREE SPEECH by banning any direct contributions by unions to local candidates.

Join the Campaign

- WEBSITE: CaliforniaLabor.org/CorporateDeception
- TWITTER: twitter.com/CaliforniaLabor
- FACEBOOK: facebook.com/CaliforniaLaborFederation

DON’T BE FOOLED!

Stop big corporations from silencing California’s working people

STOP THE CORPORATE POWER GRAB
BAD FOR WORKERS, SMALL BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES

California LABOR Federation

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS LOCAL UNION 551