Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Although this year’s construction season has gotten off to a slow start there is every reason to believe that full employment can once again be achieved if we all work together towards that goal. There are two primary factors that determine the employment rate of our local union’s membership; they are the size of the local construction market and our share of that market. We have a limited ability to influence the size of the local construction economy but with hard work we can significantly influence our share of the market by effectively organizing our jurisdiction. So here’s the question, what can we actively do to organize the work and the workforce in our communities and how will that ultimately lead to a higher standard of living for those of us who have chosen to work in the electrical construction industry? The answer to this question will determine the amount of work we perform and the wage and benefit package that we receive for that work.

We all have an important role to play if we are to increase our market share and take control of the resulting jobs. I’d like to talk with you about a couple areas that we must always work on with due diligence and a steadfast resolve to represent the best interests of our membership and working families in our jurisdiction. It all starts with our values, a commitment to excellence, the pride and professionalism of a highly skilled electrician, the productivity that sets our IBEW workforce and union contractors apart from our un-represented competition.

Our competitive advantage is directly related to the investments we make towards training the skills, knowledge and attitude necessary to increase productivity. It begins on the first day of apprenticeship orientation and continues day after day, week after week, and year after year until that day when it’s time to hang up the tool belt and enjoy a well earned union retirement. We must make sure that we stay up to date on the latest technology, always looking for ways to increase our skill sets and maximizing the value our contractors bring to their clients.

One of our local’s major objectives was to develop a state-of-the-art electrical training center where journeymen and apprentices would easily receive the highest level of instruction covering all areas of our rapidly changing industry. With the grand opening of our new training center earlier this year, I believe we’re on the way to achieving our education and training goals.

Unfortunately, when it comes to increasing work opportunities it takes more than simply concentrating on the development of highly skilled, safe and productive electricians. We also have to dedicate time to organizing in every sector of the electrical construction industry be it residential, light commercial, traffic signal, PV, VDV, hospitals, schools or industrial power plants to name just a few. In each of these areas we face different challenges but the solutions are always the same … to organize all workers in the electrical construction industry.

One of the new programs we plan on using to help us organize is called Member-to-Member training. The primary goal of this program is to get more of our members involved. The program draws on our rich IBEW history to explain why every member should be a vocal advocate for unions in their communities. The local union officers will be the first to take the class that will provide them with better listening skills and answers for the most common questions they are likely to receive. They then will leave the classroom and knock on doors to talk with local union members about coming to meetings and volunteering. I’m happy to report that we have a core group of dedicated volunteers who have answered the calls for help with political campaigns or when important issues have come up for a hearing or vote before elected boards, commissions or regulatory agencies.

We hope to increase our strength by doubling the number of trade union activists within the local over the next year. We also want to make it fun to volunteer with various social events mixed in each year and of course the second annual volunteer appreciation dinner. Last year’s celebration was held at M. Y. China restaurant in the Graton Resort and Casino and by all accounts was enjoyed by all who attended. These members helped pass the Marin General Hospital $394 million Bond Measure F where we have negotiated a PLA for all the hospital capital improvement projects and the County of Sonoma PLA resolution.

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Both of these campaigns took a great deal of work and could not have succeeded without the broad based coalition we formed with other labor organization, environmentalists, social activists and elected leaders from all over the North Bay. Our members clearly stood out as shining examples of a healthy labor union with articulate persuasive opinions full of pride and passion. They were amazing and effective!

The power and influence our local demonstrates is directly related to the number of workers we represent and their willingness to engage in the struggle to defend the middle class and in turn protect working families. Just think what can be accomplished if we double the number of members who are ready, willing and able to take our union’s skill, value, productivity and safety message to every corner of our jurisdiction and beyond. That is our challenge and our destiny will be decided by our actions. Please make a little time to stand shoulder to shoulder with your IBEW Local 551 brothers and sisters when you get a knock on the door, email, text message or phone call asking for your help in building your union. It will be time well spent! Work smart, work safe and may God bless you all.
STAY IN THE KNOW

★ CREDIT CARDS: Credit Card payments are no longer accepted over the phone. Please make your payment online or in person. You do not have to be a member of the website to pay online. When paying your dues with a credit card we would appreciate a minimum of 3 months dues. This will help reduce our processing fees. “A” members $35 per month and “BA” members $20 per month for 2014.

★ It is very important to keep your address, phone number and email address current with the local as we are starting to email notices to members with email addresses.

★ Go to Unionplus.org and see what discounts are available to you. Some examples are 15% discount off your AT&T bill, discounted theme park tickets, motor club and car rental discounts. These are just a few of the many discounts offered to our membership.

CONDOLENCES

Our sympathies to the family and friends of the following who have recently passed. Retired members:

Name Initiation Birthdate
Billy Havoy 06/01/64 11/15/39
Allesandro Gori 12/11/64 02/17/35
Thomas Mack 07/01/65 07/16/33

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Annual Building Corp Meeting August 14, 2014, 6:00 pm here at the Union Hall meeting room upstairs.

Member Appreciation/Old Timers Night Friday, October 10, 2014. More information will be coming!

STEVE STOBELO - TRAINING DIRECTOR

You were recently mailed out a list of classes being offered this summer. As of today we have had to cancel 3 out of the 5 classes due to lack of participation. We will be scheduling at least one Journeyman class every 2 to 3 months (depending on Holidays) with the approval of the JATC Committee. As soon as the schedule is approved we will post the information regarding each class.

If you are interested in a specific topic and did not see it on the recent flyer listing the summer classes, please contact us. You might not be the only one interested in attending that particular class.

If you would like to share your knowledge with other Journeyman, give us a call. We would like to talk with you about becoming an instructor.

Just a reminder you do need to have 32 hours of educational training in order to renew your California State Certification.

JOHN MCENTAGART - MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

I would like to thank all members who have stepped up so far this year to help out OUR union and all working men and women. Our volunteers so far include the following members: Charlie O’Neil, Seth Morie, Brian Johnson, Brandon Cunningham, James Powers, Sean Gardner, James Solwick, Brad Pierce, Trevin Pullan, Julian Osterloh, Andrew Burger, Arthur Cader, James Withington, Andy Vranesevich, Eamonn O’Halloran, Jeff Alee; Dale Krabbe, Gary Thornburgh, Aaron Ulyott, Cornelius Bracy-Cruz, Mark Dohner, Gary Giuliani, Tim Purugganan, Tom Varney, Bill Farman; Hjalmar Hake; Jared Mumm; Michael Wilson, Michael Donegan, Keith Ivashkevich, Val Beltran, Phil Pitcavage, Mike Artegiani, Colton McBean, Joseph Clay and Chris Perez. We also have a growing list of non-members who are willing to help out when called upon and we are very grateful to for already stepping up this year: Thad Farman, Leon Wilmott, Jessica Hake, Daniel Rosas, Manuel Rosas, Brandon Ivashkevich, Lisa Rendall, Darleen Hollis and Brandon Chatoian. These members and non-members have joined together to speak in favor of projects, policy or politicians that favor the middle class.

If we want to stay in the middle class, then it is important that we continue to show up, continue to stand up, continue to vote and let our collective voices be heard. Remember we are not just one vote – one of our members Sean Gardner brought his wife Akasha (who was pregnant with their child Nico) and his parents to the Board of Supervisors meeting in January to speak in our favor. Sean is a great example of how one member is actually worth at least 4 votes. It’s vital we use these resources to further our cause. We may have a significant other; maybe our kids are old enough to vote; maybe our parents see how hard we work for what we have; maybe we have friends or neighbors who would be sympathetic if we would ask them for help. The point is we are not just a few – WE are many!! WE are IBEW Local 551 and we are the community.

Brothers and Sisters together we can make a difference but individually we will just get picked off–so let’s always stand together. Remember if we all do a little then a lot gets done.
SOUND & COMMUNICATIONS

A meeting to discuss upcoming negotiations on the Sound and Communications Agreement will be held:

When: Saturday August 2, 2014
Time: 10:00am to 12:00pm
Where: Local 595 Union Hall
6250 Village Parkway
Dublin, CA 94568

All Sound and Communications members are invited.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are currently looking for volunteers for the Sonoma County Fair Building Trades Booth. We are responsible for the booth on Saturday July 26, Sunday July 27 and Saturday August 9. The shifts are two hours and you will receive a free pass to get in plus a parking pass. Please call the hall if you are interested.

Here is the latest example of how our contractors and members volunteer to improve the community that we live in.

FROM THE TRUST FUND OFFICE

The Redwood Empire Electrical Workers Trust Fund will be holding a Health Fair for all active and retired commercial electricians on:

Date: Saturday, October 4, 2014.
Time: 10am to 2pm
Place: The Fair will be at the Apprenticeship Building at 1726 Corby Ave., Santa Rosa

Please keep your beneficiary forms up to date. If you named a beneficiary such as an ex-spouse, brother, sister, cousin etc. prior to your marriage or having children your pension and death benefit will be paid to who you had originally designated unless you keep them up to date. This pertains to all classifications, Inside, Sound & Communication, Residential & CE/CW’s.

ANNUAL LABOR DAY BREAKFAST

You and your family are invited to the North Bay Labor Council Annual Labor Day Pancake Breakfast. It’s FREE! The Breakfast will be held:

Date: Monday, September 1, 2014
Time: Breakfast at 8:00 am
Program at 9:00 am
Place: Carpenters’ Labor Center
1700 Corby Ave.
Santa Rosa, CA