



# IBEW Local Union 551

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers - Santa Rosa, CA

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## From the Business Manager - Jack A. Buckhorn



Dear Sisters & Brothers,

I recently attended the IBEW Ninth District Progress Meeting where the delegates were happy to receive information that showed an increase in membership and market share for 2006. The Ninth District

encompasses Alaska, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Washington and a portion of Idaho and has grown faster than any of the other Districts in the Brotherhood. If the trend continues it will soon be the largest District in the IBEW. Our local has contributed to the positive results as we have shown steady growth over the years. While this is certainly good news it is only the start and if we are to continue the success it will take all of us working together. You can help build and strengthen our local union in several important areas.

The first request I have is for you to attend the Construction Organizing Membership Education and Training (COMET). We have been teaching COMET for over ten years now and many of you have already completed the training, but for those who have not it is important that you attend this one time education class. COMET is designed to provide you with a solid understanding of the importance of organizing electrical workers into the union. As union members we work under a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) that provides us with standard working rules and the best wage and benefit package in the area. There is strength in numbers, that's the only reason we have a higher standard of living than unorganized electricians.

Nonunion electrical contractors exploit their workers by paying them substandard wages and benefits. These unorganized workers deserve the opportunity to provide for their families in the same way we do by working under a CBA. The size and availability of the unorganized workforce and nonunion contractors also affect our ability to negotiate better

wages and benefits by reducing union market share. To no ones surprise, we continually find that many nonunion employers are violating the law by cheating on prevailing wage regulations. We have stepped up our compliance activities and have exposed several of the schemes that these unscrupulous employers are using to cheat their workers and engage in unfair competition against legitimate contractors who adhere to the law. We will not stop until our union contractors are assured of bidding on a level playing field.

This summer the NECA-IBEW National Labor Management Cooperation Committee commissioned a survey to assist local unions with information needed to measure market trends. The survey provided us with "employment share" and "wage share" percentages for our six counties and places our market share at 36% and 38% respectively. When I look at these figures it reminds me that there is much work to be done. While the data does not breakdown our individual counties, we know that the majority of our work is performed in Marin and Sonoma where market share is much higher than the previously stated percentages. We continue to work hard in our outlying counties, as well as our southern counties, to organize new contractors and establish a local workforce that enjoy the wages and benefits necessary for a strong middle class standard of living.

Organized labor is credited with building the middle class society in America after WWII and we are the only organization that is able to stand up to corporate greed and defend the working class. It seems to me that American workers have been under attack since 1981 when President Reagan replaced the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) workers for going out on strike. I still don't understand why the AFL-CIO stood by and did nothing. This leads me to another area that is essential to the continuation of a successful labor union movement, solidarity. Solidarity is defined as: Harmony of interests and responsibilities among individuals in a group, especially as manifested in unanimous support and collective action for something.

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### ATTEND YOUR LOCAL UNION MEETINGS!

General Meeting/2nd Thurs/6pm

Eureka Unit Meeting/2nd Tues/5pm

## REMINDERS



### **Old Timers Night**

Friday, October 26, 2007—Old Timers Night—Sheraton, Petaluma. All members and retirees are invited to come and enjoy an evening of dinner/drinks/dessert, door prizes and a short ceremony to honor our members with 20+ years of service. This is always a great time for those who attend. Invitations have been mailed, please return if you plan to attend

### **Christmas Party**

Thursday, December 13, 2007, 6:00 pm— At the general meeting we will be having a Christmas party with good food, raffle prizes and lots of fun. Please come and join us for a great time!!

### **International Dues**

January 1 of 2008, 2009, 2010 & 2011 dues for “A” members will increase by \$1.00 per year. When you are 3 months behind in dues your payment must be **received** in this office by the last business day of the 3rd month for you to not be charged the reinstatement fee. Example: If you owe for Aug, Sept. & Oct, your payment must be **received** in this office by October 31 (the last business day of the month)

### **Credit Card Payments**

Effective immediately— Credit Cards can be used to make International dues payments **ONLY**. Payments can be made on our website, over the phone or in person with your credit card.

### **\*Holiday Schedule**

#### **Inside Construction**

Monday, 11/12 Veterans Day  
Thursday, 11/22 &  
Friday, 11/23 Thanksgiving  
Tuesday, 12/25 Christmas

#### **Residential**

No Holiday  
Thursday, 11/22 &  
Friday, 11/23 Thanksgiving  
Tuesday, 12/25  
& the weekday before or after  
Christmas (see agreement)

#### **Sound & Communication**

No Holiday  
Thursday, 11/22 &  
Friday, 11/23 Thanksgiving  
Tuesday, 12/25 Christmas

Tuesday, 1/1/08 New Years

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Tuesday, 1/1/08 New Years

\*If you work on any of the above days you are to be paid double time for each hour worked.

## CONDOLENCES

Our thoughts and prayers to the family and friends of the following members who have recently passed. Retired Brother James Elliott passed away on August 2 and had been a member since 1956. Retired Brother William Durham passed away on September 13 and had been a member since 1950. Retired Brother Michael McKinney passed away on September 21 and had been a member since 1961. Retired Brother Roger Lawrence passed away on September 29 and had been a member since 1980.



## THANKS TO VOLUNTEERS!!

Thank you to the following for taking the time to volunteer at the Sonoma County Fair booth, John Lloyd, Larry Metz, Joe Scott (retired), Bob Smith (Morton Smith Electric), Dee Soza and Steve Stobel. We have shared the fair booth with the Building Trades the past five years or so and have received a positive response from all who visit the booth. Give us a call at fair time and maybe you can help us out next year!

We have also done some volunteer work at Montgomery High School which is mentioned in Steve Stobel's article. Thank you.

## DAVID BORGESON—BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE

Greetings from the north. While growing into this job the last few months, it has become apparent there is no shortage of things to do and I have started to have to prioritize my efforts. There is member maintenance, job tracking, labor compliance activities, building trades coordination, contractor contacts, facilitating the apprenticeship program, internal organizing, researching and educating myself in the numerous California Laws, and establishing relationships with the many awarding bodies, political committees, and state entities. And there is more! I have even begun to wake up in the night thinking about it all, but am satisfied that with the help of our organization, from the local to the international, representation for electrical workers is present in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties.

Of particular importance here is the underutilized port and railroad that in the past has provided the means for the types of jobs this area needs once again. I'm glad to say there are a lot of good people that have been working hard for a long time to make it a reality, and they are very receptive to our involvement and interest.

To the members living within the boundaries of the Humboldt Bay Harbor District, carefully consider the candidates running for the 2 open commissioner seats and understand the long range implications these positions carry. I'll be glad to pass on who and why the local has endorsed and contributed to, so get informed and make your choice this November.

## DENISE SOZA—BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE

Summer gone? What? Well, I hope everyone had a chance to enjoy with family and friends. And it seems everyone has been busy working, this is very good.

To keep our work picture abundant, there are many elements that happen behind the scenes to make sure we continue to bring in our hard earned dough. One of those vital elements is to get YOU involved in YOUR union. Those of you that attend your monthly meeting and volunteer for issues that matter to this union can skip this paragraph. But those of you that don't, I just ask why not? The meetings are only one happy fun filled hour and a half a month. Piece of cake, right? And if every member volunteered just one time a year, wow, then our usual suspects could kick up their feet and relax a bit.

As you know, the Presidential Primaries are coming up in February. Well, that's truly just around the corner. And believe it or not... volunteers are needed for phone banking. Pick your candidate and I will hook you up with the right people that need YOU right now. And not only are Presidential hopefuls in need, we have local candidates running for City

Council, Supervisor seats and such. So really, if you care about the direction of your City, County, and or Country, please don't hesitate to ring my phone off the hook, because you are all good brothers and sisters willing to help out anyway you possibly can!

And just a reminder... Political Action Committee Meeting is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month 5 pm. The meeting is located at Steele Lane and Cleveland Ave at the Round Table Pizza. Come brainstorm on political issues and candidates that effect all of us.

Attention apprentices, your meeting time has changed to 5 pm 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month, and is also located at the Round Table Pizza on Cleveland and Steele Lane in Santa Rosa. For the apprentices, by the apprentices, nice concept!

As always, I'm here for you. Issues? Let's talk about it. Job site visit, maybe have a little lunch together? Give me a call let me know where you're working, I'll be there. Looking forward to hearing from you soon. Work safe and let me see you at the next general meeting, o.k.? Great!

## STEVE STOBEL - BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE

I'd like to thank some members that donated their time to install some pathway and security lighting at Montgomery High School this summer. Jeff Kostka, Ed Matticola, Charlie O'Neil, Patrick Wheeler and myself gave up two Saturdays to help on this project. The faculty, parents, and students appreciate your efforts.

Congratulations to our members that attended our latest Job Steward training class taught by I.O. Rep. Mike Meals on Wednesday evening July 18 : Dave Borgeson, Joey Burtner, Bill Farman, John Lloyd, Charlie O'Neil, John Quinto, Calder Rossi, and Sergio Sales. These classes cover a wide range of on the job scenarios that occur more frequently than

you might think. It's a good thing for all of our members to know, and if you are interested in attending the next class give us a call to get signed up.

This is a reminder that we are getting closer to the time for renewal of the State Certification. As a "General" electrician license holder we are required to have 32 hours of continuing education before the expiration date of your current license, for most electricians that will be the anniversary of your test date in 2009.

Work Safe.

## JOHN LLOYD - ORGANIZER

I am delighted that the collective efforts of my friend and brother Ray Nichols and the compliance team of NCECI has helped make the advances we have made in organizing aggressive and productive. The new members and contractors who have made the decision to become a part of this organization make all the hard work worth the effort. They are realizing the benefits of the IBEW.

We have spent many hours working compliance and making sure that contractors are treating their employees fairly and helping to keep our efforts to secure the work on an even playing field. The opportunities to organize members are endless and I will continue to work hard to improve our market-share in the trade.

The photovoltaic training is continuing and we need as many members as possible to commit to this training. If we can get the members to commit to the training, I have been told that we could get a training class scheduled here for November.

The governor has mandated that by 2016 there will be one million systems in operation for 3000 MW of power. This could be a banner year for the IBEW in the solar field.

Remember, when you are invited to the COMET class that this is a mandatory class for all IBEW members. If you are invited, RSVP and attend this one time class. It is very informative and will help you the members understand the benefits of member organizing in the field. The only way that we will be able to achieve the organizing goals is for everyone to participate and help another electrician realize the dreams of a living wage and benefits for them and their families.

As I have said every time in the newsletter, attend the meetings. You have a voice in what happens in this local and the best way to voice that opinion is to be present at the meetings and take part in the decisions that mold this local. We all have a common goal and need to work together to achieve it.

Thank you to the following members who completed the COMET Class in the 3rd quarter: Ben Ballard, Kevin Boller, Matt Caraway, Aaron Celovsky, Mike Cox, Michael Descagnia, Joseph Ferrara, Jon Jensen, Jason Kitchens, Julian Osterloh, Brandon Taylor, Spencer Tomosvary and Kristopher Whitney.

The loss of solidarity has raised a red flag within organized labor and has resulted in an overall lack of participation in union activities. Some union members believe that the union is no longer necessary and in fact is a hindrance to their careers. These members don't have a problem violating the CBA working rules that have been established to protect the dignity of workers on the job. Their allegiance is skewed in an unhealthy way towards their employer. International President Ed Hill has recognized this shortcoming and recently shared his thoughts on the subject, he said "Our members are

on loan to our contractor. It's not the other way around or it shouldn't be..." President Hill strongly believes in eight hours work for eight hours pay and in the Code of Excellence, as these practices are essential to the success of the IBEW, but at the end of the day it's solidarity in the union that really matters. I share that opinion and hope that you do as well. The trade union movement must regain the will to work together for the common good of our members and our country.

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



New Officers of Local 551 from left to right, Examining Board Charlie O'Neil, Executive Board Jim McQuaid, Steve Benjamin, Melissa Benjamin, Business Manager Jack Buckhorn, Recording Secretary Jennifer Greenwood, President Bruce Piper, Vice President Denise Soza, Treasurer Larry Metz & Executive Board Patrick Wheeler. Not pictured: Tom Ritch & Steve Stobel Examining Board.

### **ELECTRICAL CERTIFICATION UPDATE**

All General Electricians in the employment of a C-10 contractor must now be certified in order to perform work in California. All general Electricians must have completed 32 hours of continuing education within three years after they have successfully passed the certification examination or three years from December 31, 2006 if you took the test prior to that date. All Residential Electricians have until December 31, 2007 to successfully pass the examination. The Redwood Empire JATC has several educational classes to help you meet the continuing education requirement. A complete list of classes we offer are on our website at [www.rejatc.org](http://www.rejatc.org) or feel free to contact our office at (707) 523-3837. Prior registration is required for all courses.

### **VOICE DATA VIDEO CERTIFICATION UPDATE**

All Voice Data and Video (VDV) Technicians working for C-10 contractors will need to be certified by the State of California by January 1, 2008. In order to help you prepare for the examination there is a practice test available at [www.norcalvdv.org](http://www.norcalvdv.org).

### **CONTINUING EDUCATION**

#### **FIRST AID / CPR TRAINING**

Many of the emergency procedures required in medical training are taught to you in this six hour course including cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), First Aid and the correct use of the Automatic External Deliberator (AED). There is a \$25.00 fee for this course.

#### **SOLAR ELECTRICITY**

In this class, you will examine solar cells and learn how they convert the sun's energy directly into electricity. Using our own facility as a demo point we will show the proper installation methods involved in implementing a solar system. There are two night classes and one Saturday that is spent in the lab where you actually get to hook up several types of solar panels, controllers and all the equipment needed to make a solar system work.

#### **OSHA 10 HOUR TRAINING**

This course covers a number of safety subjects, including all the requirements required by OSHA for supervisory employees of construction projects. After completion of the ten hour class you will receive a certificate that meets the requirement that OSHA is requiring for all supervisory personal on construction sites.

#### **ELECTRICAL PROJECT SUPERVISION / FOREMANSHIP**

This course covers topics that include defining the rule of a Foreman. You will learn team building, verbal communications skills, performance management, safety, production management, planning and scheduling and material management.

#### **CONDUIT BENDING INSTRUCTION (LEVEL I & II)**

The first course is entry level course that is designed to give you six easy lessons on the basic concepts of conduit bending. You will learn how to fabricate 90 degree stubs as well as offsets, kicks and three and four bend saddles. The second course is all about the art of segment bending and becoming familiar with concentric bending. Each course is 10 hours.

#### **BASIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

This class covers the basics of telecommunications and installation of voice and data cabling. You'll learn the differences in voice and data cable as well as the cable make-up itself and the reasons for their differences.