DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I’m happy to report that the employment picture in our local has dramatically improved over last year with work hours up over 12% and the prospects for future employment very strong. All of our hard work fighting for work opportunities during the great recession is now paying off with steady growth that will be measured by increased market share. I know many of you were able to keep food on the table during these difficult times by traveling to our sister locals. The amount of construction work taking place in San Francisco and San Jose is incredible. We are so fortunate to live so close to such strong union cities with such long-standing labor traditions and great IBEW Local Unions. The strength of these Locals didn’t happen by accident. To build strong unions it takes all of us standing together fighting for fair contract with great working conditions. It also requires our highly trained and productive workforce utilizing all the skill, knowledge and professional attitude that define our union business model.

Here at home we have been waging that continuous battle against the anti-union forces. We fight the good fight by supporting policies that give working families the ability to succeed. Our advocacy work has resulted in many victories including the passage of over one trillion dollars of school bonds in the last three years in our jurisdiction. We were able to assemble a large group of volunteers to phone bank and precinct walk in support of these important school improvement measures. Over the years this type of work has been the bread and butter of our local contractors. The relationships that we have developed by working on these campaigns will definitely help us when the time comes for these projects to be awarded.

We have broken ground on two very big projects, both of which are covered by PLAs, that will bring a great deal of stability to our workforce over the next couple years. The first is the Marin General Hospital project. Two phases of construction have started with Schetter Electric on phase one building a new parking structure and installing temporary power. Phase two covers the realignment of the main entrance of the hospital in preparation for the construction of the new hospital. Morrow Meadows has been selected as the electrical contractor and they currently have a small crew working on the project. I expect the markup meeting for the third phase new hospital to take place in the 1st quarter of 2016 with an increased demand for electricians starting later in the year. This is a very large project and has the potential to provide employment for over three years. Once the new hospital is completed there are plans to completely remodel the original hospital turning that space into various clinics and office space. There is a very good chance that we will be able to roll the remodel into the existing PLA providing another two years of work for our members.

The Federated Indians of Graton have also started construction of their hotel, spa and conventions space in Rohnert Park. The project consists of a six story, 200 room hotel, full spa with pool and 20,000 square foot of convention space. The project is scheduled for completion around November 2016. We have a small crew out there now but the steel is going up and the need for additional workers can’t be far behind. The project was awarded to the Las Vegas division of The Morse Electric Group. It appears they will need approximately eighty-five electricians at peak demand with the ramp up starting in the spring. Of course all these worker projections could be delayed if the El Nino actually occurs as predicted. Rain or shine these projects are going to move forward and we’ll be here to provide the workers when needed. This is the chance for many of you to come back to the Local and work a little closer to home.

Currently, we are working on several PLAs including the first one to be performed under Sonoma Counties PLA ordinance. Most of you will recall the all out assault the ABC and other anti-union forces made to defeat this ordinance. They tried all their old dirty tricks in an attempt to mislead the public as well as the Board of Supervisors but it didn’t work and the truth prevailed. Now it’s our time to show how PLAs get the job done on time and on budget while promoting local hire and apprenticeship training. I have learned over the years not to take anything for granted, especially when it comes to future projects, but I’m confident we’ll be successful in reaching agreement with the county and other developers with whom we are negotiating.

I have some exciting new concerning the future of our IBEW Local 551 union hall and property. We have started the planning process to complete a high performance building retrofit of the 2525 Cleveland Ave. facility with the goal of achieving Net Zero Energy. The purpose of the retrofit is to upgrade the facility to meet high performance building goals and demonstrate the capabilities of the IBEW members and NECA contractors. The space will be used to demonstrate future standards and work capabilities, promote new sales for our contractors in the energy efficiency market place, act as an educational facility, and create an attractive and exciting technology showcase. Once completed, we will have the first Net Zero Energy commercial building in the North Bay. If all goes according to schedule we should see construction beginning in the spring with completion towards the end of summer.

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

FROM THE BUSINESS MANAGER - Jack A. Buckhorn

ATTEND YOUR LOCAL UNION MEETINGS!

General Meeting/2nd Thurs./6pm
INTERNATIONAL DUES INCREASE FOR 2016
International Dues for 2016 A members - $37.00 per month/ BA members - $21.00 per month

NEW POLICY - NO CASH ACCEPTED

This office is no longer accepting CASH payments. This policy was implemented by the Executive Board of Local 551. Please plan to pay with check, money order or credit/debit card.

$$ WAGE INCREASE ALLOCATIONS $$

Inside Construction: $1.00 per hour increase allocated - $0.20 on the check, $0.50 - health & welfare, $0.25 - pension and $0.05 - apprenticeship training.

Sound and Communications: $2.00 per hour increase allocated - $1.00 on the check, $0.50 to health & welfare and $0.50 - pension.

Residential: $0.50 - health & welfare
CE/CW: $0.20 - health & welfare

The new wage schedules are on the website under agreements/wages. The Agreements and holiday schedules are also at this site.

STEVE STOBEL - TRAINING DIRECTOR

The Basic Foremanship Blended Learning Course will be held on:
Tuesday, March 8, 2016 - 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Thursday, March 10, 2016 - 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Saturday, March 12, 2016 - 7:00 am - 3:30 pm
This class will give you 16 hours continuous educational training to use towards your state certification renewal. The cost for this class is $90.00. You will need a computer, preferably a laptop.

The last day to sign up for this class is Tuesday, February 23, 2016. There is also a Motor Control Class starting in January. Please check the class schedule on the website for dates and times.

JOHN MCENTAGART - BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE

There will be more opportunities for volunteering this coming year since it is a Presidential election year. We will be precinct walking and phone banking as the year goes on. We will be searching for good candidates on all city councils and school boards in our jurisdiction. If you are interested in getting more involved in local politics or know someone who is a friend of labor and they are interested – let us know.

If you know of electricians who want to be in the IBEW please let them know we are actively looking for workers. If they have been a previous member, please let them know they would be welcomed back. If you know any other electricians that do not have previous experience in the IBEW please let them know we have multiple pathways for them to become a member.

We need help in the jurisdiction locating all the jobs and who is working on them. If you see a job, please let me know the location and I will follow up to see who is doing the work.

If you are interested in SALTing then please contact the Union office. Hall and we will put you through a quick salting class so you

RETIREES

If you are a retiree and need some extra help with a chore, please contact the office and we will try to get you a helper.

JOHN MCENTAGART

A big thank you to everyone who helped out volunteering this past year when you were called upon. In partnership with other unions and like-minded individuals we were able to get the San Rafael City School Bond measures passed and that is going to create over $268 million worth of upgrades to the schools – which is going to turn into a lot of work for our contractors which will mean a lot of work for us. Also we were instrumental in helping two city council members in the city of Novato get elected, Pam Drew and Josh Fryday. We walked precincts and talked about the candidates to voters – that’s it! Voters are sometimes unsure at election time because of all the mail and robo phone calls they receive and possibly too many candidates. What works very well is face to face meetings with voters – precinct walking – just knocking on someone’s door and asking them for their vote because you believe that the candidate is a good person and good for labor. We are given talking points in case the voter has more questions. Then if the voter wants to – we point out that they can contact the candidate directly either by the email address provided or with a phone call to the number provided. This is a tried and true method we use to help get like-minded individuals elected. These individuals believe what we believe – a solid middle class is essential to our collective sustainability. We need to support them in their efforts and then hold them accountable when it comes time for them to vote on legislation or policy that directly involves us, the worker, the voter. Let’s all remember we have the power should we remain united. We have the power if we all speak with one strong voice, one message.

The history of America has been largely created by the deeds of its working people and their organizations--there is scarcely an issue that is not influenced by labor’s organized efforts or lack of them.— William Cahn, Labor historian
INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS LOCAL UNION 551

REMIN德ERS

*Keep your address, phone number and email current.  
*Make sure your beneficiary information is current.  
This will guarantee that your death benefits will be given to the person/persons that you would like to receive them. Forms are available at the Union office and the Trust Fund office if you would like to change your beneficiary(s).  
*If you get 90 days behind in your International dues the International charges a $30 late fee. Example - As of December 31st your dues need to be paid through October to avoid paying the late fee.  
*No cash payments  
*Holiday Schedules, Wage Sheets & Agreements are all available on the website under agreements/wages.

MEMBER ASSISTANCE

Sometimes life can be a scramble. Your member assistance Program (MAP) offers confidential assistance and support for a wide range of issues, including legal issues, parenting skills, depression/anxiety, substance abuse, grief and loss, financial planning, job stress etc.  

All active eligible members of the Inside, Sound & Communications and Residential Health Plan and their families are eligible for this benefit.

Inside members call PacifiCare Behavioral Health (PBH) for pre-authorization prior to receiving any services.  THE PBH toll free number is 877-225-2267. When calling mention that you are a member of the Redwood Empire Electrical Workers Health & Welfare Plan.  Residential and Sound & Communication members call the same number 877-225-2267. They will ask for your social security number.

DENISE SOZA - DISPATCHER

IMPORTANT DISPATCH INFORMATION

- In order to be dispatched to a Drug-Free call you must have active status in the Drug-Free Program prior to taking a call.  
- If you have never been in the Drug-Free Program in Local 551 you will have 48 hours to test and the union hall will provide you with a test form.  
- If you have previously been in the Drug-Free program and have fallen off the list for any reason you are not eligible to take a Drug-Free call until you re-establish active status.

To re-establish you must contact Arron Powell at Bensinger, DuPont & Associates at 1 (760) 723-3056 or 1 (888) 577-3784 to take a “Return to Work” test as stated in the Drug Free Partnership Book Part-One Section III. Part B. Active Status.

Please remember to keep yourself in Active Status by testing when required in order to take a Drug-Free call.

We are grateful to a 2015 year of abundant work.  We have had a total of over 375 members placed and dispatched for the year. The workers tide is turning and we anticipate the wave to last for quite some time.

Work safe brothers and sisters! Happy Holidays and New Year!

CONDOLENCES

Our condolences to the family and friends of our recently departed members. You honored our IBEW by your service.

George McFarland passed 8-28-15 - Age 69 - initiated 3-29-74  
Raymond Knapp passed 12-1-15 - Age 78 - initiated 12-1-65  
Lewis Sievers passed 12-14-15 - Age 66 - initiated 8-27-97

A BIG thank you to the following members who precinct walked, phone banked or volunteered labor during 2015: Jared Mumm, Nick Paglia, Mark Dohner, Andrew Burger, Antony Alcazar, Mike Wilson, Jason Gutowski, Jack Buckhorn, John McEntagart, John House, Joe Scott, Julio Soto, Bill Farman, Hannah Dolan, Paulo Barros, Rich Klein, Stephanie Rivas, James Zwosta, Gary Giuliani, Tangi Tunoa, Joe Cimino and Denise Soza!

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

The following is available to any Inside Construction members working in Local 551 jurisdiction. Saving for retirement is one of the most important things you can do to provide for your financial future. This plan is offered in addition to any other retirement benefits you may have. The plan is voluntary and between you and your contractor. Saving in the plan provides you with the immediate benefits of pre-tax savings, the potential for tax-deferred growth and convenient automatic deductions directly from your pay to your account. To learn more about this plan go to www.prudential.com/NEFP and go to ready to join then enrollment kit to get all of the information you need.

NATIONAL ELECTRICAL 401 (K)

GENERAL MEETING HOLIDAY PARTY
UBEW 551 PICNIC

Jack Buckhorn & John McEntagart flipping burgers

Nick Paglia “grand prize” & John McEntagart

Nick Paglia & Andrew Burger

Fun in the Bouncy House

JOB SITE PHOTOS

Smart Train - Shimmick Construction

Norm McElhaney & Marcus Temple - Smart Train - Shimmick Construction

Nick Gronroos - Graton Hotel - Morse Electric

James Soza, Tangi Tunoa & Nick Gronroos - Graton Hotel - Morse Elect.

VALUE ON DISPLAY EVERYDAY

Marin General Hospital - Morrow Meadows