From the Business Manager - Jack A. Buckhorn

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Recently I called a staff meeting to review and update our strategic plan for increasing work opportunities within our local union. The strategic plan is our blueprint for success as it clearly outlines the many goals that we seek to accomplish. No plan will ever be perfect, but a well thought out list of goals and objectives allows for the most efficient use of our resources. In this article I want to share with you several of the goals that we will be working on this year.

We need a state-of-the-art apprenticeship training facility. IBEW/NECA apprenticeship training programs produce highly skilled and knowledgeable electricians recognized around the world as second to none. Our business model relies upon an efficient workforce committed to quality installations, displaying the highest level of craftsmanship and producing true value for the owners of the projects that our contractors are awarded. We should be proud of our commitment to excellence in training and we must promote our apprenticeship as it provides our contractors with a competitive advantage.

The problem we have is an outdated training facility that undermines our well-earned image of quality and craftsmanship to both the general public and the non-union sector of our industry. First impressions, good or bad, are difficult to change and our training center sends a message that says we don't assign a high priority to training and education. Those of us who know the history of our training program realize that, over the years, the rank and file members of this local union have fully supported our apprenticeship and we have all benefited from the steady stream of highly qualified electricians it has produced. Now, with increased demands on our program for training both apprentices and journeymen, it's time to take another bold step by investing in a new training center. I have approached NECA with a proposal to establish a jointly funded Building Corporation, if they agree I will once again ask for your support prior to our next scheduled wage increase. The purchase or construction of a building is no small task but the investment is in the best interest of both NECA and the IBEW and is vital to our long-term success.

Residential construction accounts for a large percentage of the electrical work performed in our jurisdiction and we have set a goal of capturing a majority of that market over the next two years. Working together with IBEW Locals 180 and 340, we have established the Bay to the Borders Residential Agreement that covers virtually all of Northern California. The Agreement standardizes working rules and contributions for health care and pension plans. It also coordinates apprenticeship training in our three locals. The agreement allows for total portability of workers, eliminating barriers and making it easier for electrical contractors to move crews around and stay competitive.

In addition, the agreement also brings the Plus5 Homeowners Electrical Protection Plan to anyone buying homes wired by our contractors within our three locals. The Plus5 Plan covers new homeowners for an additional five years — on top of the standard one-year warranty offered by homebuilders — in the unlikely event that electrical problems will develop with the home's electrical system. Combined, the portability, standardized benefits system and availability of the Plus5 Plan will enhance our ability to expand in the residential homebuilding market.

Politics and politicians are extremely important to achieving our goals of creating work opportunities for our membership. The establishment of our Political Action Committee has given us the ability to support local candidates who understand the importance of defending a strong middle class. We live in a very progressive area yet many of our politicians routinely take positions that hurt our ability to make a living here at home. In some cases it's simply a matter of educating those politicians on our issues and once approached they change their positions. Some politicians have an ideology that is opposed to workers issues and these individuals must be removed from office. (continued on page 2)
FROM THE BUSINESS MANAGER

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In closing, I cannot overemphasize the importance of becoming proactive in our communities by registering to vote, volunteering to phone bank or precinct walk for labor friendly candidates and pro labor initiatives. Each and every election provides opportunities to advance labor's agenda that includes, but is not limited to, human justice, human security, being against oppression of any kind, protecting the rights of workers to form unions, seeking a higher standard of living, and to support our God, our Nation and our Union. These activities within a union’s membership are the sure signs of a strong and vibrant union.

JOB STEWARD CLASS

We will be having a job steward class on Saturday, April 8, 2006, at the Union Hall located at 2525 Cleveland Ave., Santa Rosa.

This is an opportunity to educate both employers and potential stewards on the roles of stewardship and what can be expected from the viewpoint of both labor and management.

The class is expected to run from 8:00 am to approx. 4:00 pm. If you are interested in attending this class, please contact Steve Stobel at 707-542-3505.

STATE CERTIFICATION

TIME IS RUNNING OUT***MAY 31, 2006 IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER.

FOR UPDATED INFORMATION ON STATE TESTING PLEASE GO TO THE WEBSITE AT:

http://www.dir.ca.gov/DAS/ECU_FAQ.html

The $100.00 rebate from the Labor Management Cooperation Committee (LMCC) is no longer available. The rebate was only available to members of 551 who passed the test prior to December 31, 2005. If you passed prior to December 31, 2005 you are eligible for the rebate but only if you apply before April 15, 2006.

REMINDEERS

- Keep your address and phone number current with the union office. You may also provide us with your email address.
- Don’t let your dues get three months behind. Pay your dues on time so you don’t get charged the $30.00 reinstatement fee.
- Dues can be paid with Visa/MasterCard. This can be done online at our website, in person or over the phone.
- When registering on our website use your card number when asked for your member number. Your card number is on your dues receipt.
- Office hours are 8:00 am - Noon and 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm Monday thru Friday. Dispatch office opens at 7:00 am on days with jobs to dispatch.

Member Assistance Program (MAP)

Please take advantage of the New Benefit of MAP. This program will provide member assistance care. 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. Just call PBH (PacificCare 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. This benefit is not available to retirees.
MITCH CLAREY—BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE

Greetings To All

Efforts to increase market share in the Residential Market are in full swing. We are reaching out to non-signatory contractors with the new “BAY TO BORDERS” Residential Agreement. This innovative new contract is a cooperative effort between IBEW Locals 180, 340, and 551 which allows full employee portability throughout the three local jurisdictions, while offering competitive wages and benefits. The initial response has been positive as some non-signatory contractors are showing interest.

Prevailing Wage Compliance is ongoing. Last month complaints were filed against Frontier Contracting for wage violations at the Stafford Water Treatment Plant in Marin County, and on Delta Electric for wage violations at the City of San Rafael Parking Garage. As our area grows, so does the competition. There are a whole lot of people willing to work for far less than our union wage and benefit package. This, coupled with the present anti-worker political climate, present unions with never ending challenges. We need to continually reach out through words and action to prove we are the best trained and most productive in the industry, and to promote the IBEW in all ways possible.

STEVE STOBEL - BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE

Hello Brothers and Sisters,

Spring is here and the work outlook is looking pretty bright for the coming year. Our new Bay to Borders Residential Agreement will be in full swing by this summer and we anticipate regaining Market Share with this new tool. The Worksite Delegate Program is going to start up again and we are looking for enthusiastic volunteers. This program is designed to help our members communicate with each other and with the Union Hall. The goal is to have an informed membership so we can build a stronger Union. We also have a Steward Class scheduled for the first week of April. If you're not aware of a Steward's duties, it is to make sure that the Agreement is observed and followed by both Labor and Management while on the jobsite. Lastly, we have a sponsor for a Santa Rosa City League Slow Pitch Softball Team. Sign ups are here at the Hall or at the JATC. Remember, if we all participate, all the work is not left up to a few individuals. If any members are interested in getting involved with any of these programs – “Call The Hall”.

HERMAN MARCHBANKS - BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE

Work this winter has been very good with most of our workers remaining busy. Work continues to look good for the coming year, with jobs at Humboldt State University and the Fairhaven Power Plant. Also, jobs are bidding at the Eureka Airport and Humboldt County Health Department. Then late in 2007, work at the PG&E Power Plant will begin. Currently, we have been working on getting more union contractors to bid on jobs in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties. Because of the upcoming jobs, the JATC has tested about 25 apprentice applicants so we can be prepared to supply workers for these jobs.

I would like to encourage all to attend your unit meetings. These are important to your future and the future of your union. The meetings are every second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. Hope to see you all there.

CONDOLENCES

Our thoughts and prayers to the family and friends of retired Brothers Kenneth G. Smith who passed away on January 9, 2006. Ken was initiated into the IBEW in April of 1947. Also retired Brother John Kelly who passed in February. John was initiated in July of 1967.
NEW REFERRAL POLICY

Changes to our Referral System—Dispatching Rules are currently posted in the union hall and have been mailed to all members. Effective March 31, 2006 the following amendments will be incorporated into our Dispatch Policy.

1. Registrants must designate which referral zones they are available for at sign in.

2. Once a designation is made, it cannot be changed until the member’s name is removed from the available-for-work list, the member registers as a new applicant and/or the member gets a new position.

3. A person who has not designated all zones will have an opportunity to accept jobs outside of his/her designation after all other persons registered in a given zone have had the opportunity to accept jobs within their designated zones.

4. Any member who decides to not participate in the Drug-Free Workforce Program will not receive strikes for job calls requiring “active” participation in the Program.

COMET CLASS

The International Office has requested that all members of the IBEW attend a COMET (Construction Organizing Membership Education Training) Class. When you get your letter please make every effort to attend. Thank you to the following members who have completed the COMET class since January 1, 2006:

Egar Andino       William Morato
Michael Artegiani Seth Morie
Joey Burtner     Ryan Netto
Cesar De Alba    Daniel Ramirez
Harold Fenton Jr. Juan Rodriguez
Brian Ferguson   Ray Sciaccia
David Harris     Jeffrey Swift
Adam Hollingsworth
Jerry Horn        Marsha Texiera
Chad Krisher     Matthew Tuttle
Christopher McCoy

At the 9th District Progress Meeting our local was recognized with a plaque for training 72 members in 2005. Thank you to Steve Stobol and Gary Giuliani for all your hard work in COMET training. Welcome to Charlie Crocker as a new COMET instructor. Let’s make 2006 an even better year for COMET training than 2005!

RETIREE CLUB MEETING

The Retiree Club meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at Marys Pizza Shack at Marlow and Piner Road in Santa Rosa. They meet at 12:30 pm. The retiree club provides a great opportunity to get together with old friends and meet new friends.

LOOKING FOR A NEW CAR??

If you are looking for a new vehicle, please consider Phyllis Winslow at Hansel Ford. Phyllis gave our local a great deal on the purchase of our new Ford Escape Hybrid. Phyllis can be contacted at her office at 707-643-7300 or cell phone 707-888-0111.