Season’s greetings to all Local 551 Sisters and Brothers,

We are in the holiday season and I hope and trust that everyone has had a great year. With the information we currently have, we believe that 2020 is going to be an even busier year than 2019. There are several construction projects that we are tracking both current and upcoming - collectively the work picture looks as strong as it has ever been. 2019 was as busy as we projected. Our overall membership numbers are up and our apprenticeship is as strong as it has been in over 10 years. It is now our time, our collective goal is to maintain and grow Local 551 into a Union that will be here for the generations that follow us.

While we grow our Union, it is just as important to maintain our political presence locally, statewide and at the federal level. These individuals who are elected by you and I, need to be held accountable if they say one thing then do another once they get into office. Someone has to call them out and remind them that working families believed them and helped elect them. If they go back on their word – then we take action, vote them out and elect someone else, until we find someone who will keep their word and won’t be afraid to stand with working families. That is why politicians stand up and take notice of organized labor. When we organize, when we unite collectively the work picture looks as strong as it has ever been.

Before we support any political candidate, every member should ask that candidate:

1) Do you support organized labor?

2) Do you support prevailing wage laws?

3) Do you support Project Labor Agreements (PLA’s)?

4) Do you support local state approved apprenticeship programs?

5) Do you oppose “Right To Work” legislation?

These are the questions we in construction need to be asking of our elected officials. Prevailing wage is our wage. The unions write the prevailing wage laws. If the prevailing wage laws go away (ie Right To Work legislation) then our world as we know it goes away also. All public works jobs (schools; govt buildings; other public buildings) would go to the lowest bidder and our union contractors would not be able to compete anymore. It would be a race to the bottom for all contractors who want to survive. It would be exactly like the residential market right now – and we all know how that is.

So, I ask you to ask these questions, and fight like hell against anyone who states that they support “Right To Work” legislation or they oppose prevailing wages, because they are coming for your paycheck, they are coming for your home and they are coming for your union. These questions weed out the bad actors and allow those who support us to step forward proudly stating they support Union families. Then it’s our turn. We must support those candidates who support our values. We must show them OUR COLLECTIVE STRENGTH by helping them get elected and giving labor a voice at the table. We start by making sure we are registered to vote. THEN WE VOTE in every election together for the same candidates who support Unions. We vote as an organization with ONE voice and ONE action. We vote to preserve our way of life – prevailing wage, workers’ rights. We are powerless if we all go in different directions, but our power is limitless if we all stick together and do the same thing at the same time – we vote as one.

It’s not only ourselves and our families that we are fighting for - because we have it pretty good. A good wage, good health care and a pension that would allow us to retire with dignity – it’s everybody we are fighting for – all workers.

(continued on page 2)
If everybody working in our industry had access to the same health care we have, had the same pensions we have, worked under the same working conditions we do – then this world would be a better place and a lot more of our friends and neighbors would be less stressed. As the auld saying goes “a rising tide lifts all boats.” If we are in a wishing mood, then that should be our wish for all working families this holiday season.

Again, this is the holiday season, and while this is a festive time for most, there are those among us who get very down or depressed during this time of year. Please look out for our brothers and sisters who may be struggling out there. It might not be obvious, but I ask that you be vigilant and pay attention to those you are working alongside. We are all members of the IBEW and it’s a good reminder that the “B” stands for Brotherhood, which means we are charged to look out for one another. If you see someone struggling, step forward and say something. If you don’t know what to say, then call this office or call our Member Assisted Program (MAP). Let them know that you are working with someone who may need help but you don’t know what you should say – MAP can help you bridge that gap. If you need information regarding treatment programs, call the number on your health care card and someone there will assist you.

I want to congratulate the Sound & Communication members for their new agreement. Your hard work on the jobsite, attention to detail and everyday excellence helped our argument at CIR, and with the result you were awarded the largest contract this unit has ever seen. Schedule 2A & 2D received $12.25 over 3 years and Schedule 2E received $9.55 also over 3 years. We also added a Fire Alarm MOU to the S&C Collective Bargaining Agreement, so if you are working in Local 551 on a Fire Alarm system, you should be getting paid Inside Wireman wages and benefits.

Finally, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our former Office Assistant Katelyn Rubio. Katelyn has moved on to bigger and better things for herself and her family. She worked as Sue’s assistant for over 5 years and did a wonderful job for all of us for the time she spent here. Katelyn will be missed and we wish her every success.

Always remember to thank a retiree for paving the road we now travel. Happy holidays to everyone, hug and kiss your loved ones and have a safe and incredibly Happy New Year.

John Me - 707-477-2140

JOE TREMAINE - BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE - DISPATCHER

Hello Brothers and Sisters, the 2019 year has been a fast and furious ride so far. To date we have experienced high dispatch volumes, and a broad range of challenging calls that our membership has engaged with the utmost of pride and professionalism. The foreseeable future is filled with new projects both large and small.

As we close in on the much anticipated year of 2020 the excitement builds looking forward to some new jobs in Sonoma County. Among the new jobs are a Hospital, and Courthouse in Santa Rosa, and there are also renewed expectations for another Casino Hotel in Rohnert Park for the Spring of 2020.

JARED MUMM & JOSE CASAS - MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT REPRESENTATIVES

From the Organizers,

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year! We hope that 2019 treated you and yours well, and the new year finds you in good health and good spirits.

We have spent 2019 trying new things in Organizing. We’ve spent more time on the doorsteps of our unrepresented brothers and sisters than we have in the past, and through the busiest months we were sending out weekly mailers to any state certified electrician that wasn’t already a member. We’ve also focused more on meeting our local non signatory contractors face to face in their offices and we will continue to do so. We are still reaching workers on their job sites, and we have stepped up our presence online as well. We also have a new Recruitment Incentive Program, where any 551 member can earn $1500 for referring an unrepresented, state certified electrician to us. (So far, no one has claimed the money, you could be the first!) Some of our local non signatory contractors seem to be very agitated by our combined efforts, and we’ve let them know that we have no intention to let up on our pursuit to organize every worker in our industry.

We will be closing out the year with some political action, working with other union trades to reach out to all our members together in support of Shirlee Zane for Sonoma County Board of Supervisors. We recently have had some local people speak very strongly in favor of labor unions, and we need to work to support those people that stick their necks out to support us. We can do more together and we will be asking for your help throughout 2020 to create more job opportunities for union electricians working in the North Bay.

You can always reach your Organizers.

Jared Mumm - 707-479-4422 or Jose Casas - 707-529-8173

In solidarity,

Jose Casas and Jared Mumm
Season’s greetings from the Training Center

The academic school year began this year in early September. We have indentured 30 new Inside Apprentices into our first-year class and we also have 2 new Residential apprentices in our Residential apprenticeship program. We are happy to announce that all 118 of our apprentices have been gainfully employed throughout the summer and are still working at this time.

We have framed out our lighting control lab, which has Eight 8X8 sheet metal framed rooms just like we would see on the jobsite. We will be working on adding advanced lighting control labs on several different systems into our hands-on curriculum, as well as teaching all of our 5th year students CALCTP advanced lighting control this year. We are constantly trying to stay ahead of emerging technologies so that our apprentices and graduates are familiar with whatever they may encounter on the job.

To teach is to learn twice. Remember that learning doesn’t stop when an apprentice becomes a journeyman. We all have something to teach one another…

THE WOMEN’S COMMITTEE - WE STAND TOGETHER

IBEW 551 has created a new group called The Women’s Committee-We Stand Together. This committee was created by the women of our local to help promote women’s growth. At this time it only meets three times a year and is open to any member not just women. We focus on volunteering in our community, helping women get into the trades and encourage the women who are current members.

Toy Drive Alert - IBEW 551 is now helping a near by organization called the Living Room. It is located just 2 miles from the hall and is open to homeless/at-risk women and children during the day when other shelters are closed. During the holiday season one way we can help is by donating to the children in need. There will a box set up at the hall where you can bring in new toys. The age of children range from infants to teenagers some suggestions would be Legos, cars, art supplies, baby dolls and Barbies. Thank You

Stephanie Hall - 707-478-1716

CONGRATULATIONS PROUD PARENTS

Sean Gregory - Everett - 8/3/19
Ryan Thornhill - Aurora - 8/4/19
Michael Robertson - Michael - 8/8/19
Christopher Thomas - Peter - 8/15/19
Chris Solgat - Calvin - 8/19/19
Matthew Estes - Lukas - 11/24/19

BENEVOLENT FUND

If you find yourself in financially troubled times, please remember that Local 551 has a Benevolent Fund which is available to members. You can make a request to the Benevolent Fund Committee on the website or contact the Union office. You can also make contributions to the Fund to help your fellow brothers or sisters.

CONDOLENCES

Our condolences to the family and friends of our recently departed members. You honored IBEW Local 551 by your service.

Michael Lytwynec passed away on 8/15/19. He was 48 years old and a member for 6 months.

Charles “Chuck” Reed passed away on 9/17/19. He was 74 years old and a member for 50 years

Robert Burns passed away on 11/24/19. He was 87 years old and a member for 60 years.
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 Heath (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.

VALUE ON DISPLAY

REMINDERS

• Keep your address, email and phone number current. We are doing a lot of notices via text and email so this is very important!

• If you work outside of Local 551 jurisdiction, please make sure you complete Reciprocity (ERTS) and confirm hours and contributions are being transferred to your Home Fund.

• Please notify your Trust Fund office asap when you have a new child, get married/divorced etc. Notify the Union office for a form to change your death benefit beneficiary.

• If you get 90 days behind in your International dues the International charges a $30 late fee.

• We no longer accept CASH payments. Dues can be paid with credit card or check. You can pay by mail, online, in person or by phone.

UPCOMING HOLIDAYS
WEDNESDAY - JAN 1, 2020 - NEW YEARS DAY
MONDAY - JAN. 20, 2020 - MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY
MONDAY - FEB. 17, 2020 - PRESIDENTS DAY